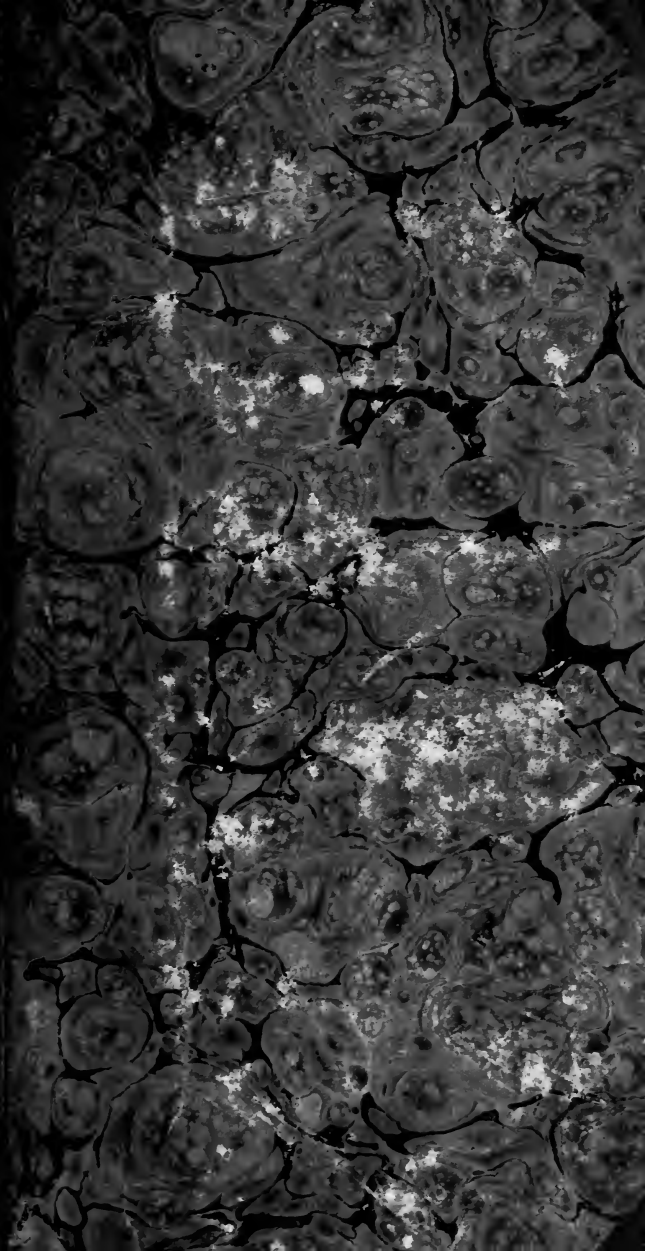


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THE  
KNIGHT OF ST. JOHN,  
A Romance,

By Miss ANNA MARIA PORTER,

AUTHOR OF "*THE RECLUSE OF NORWAY*," &c. &c. &c.

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" Le dévouement de soi-même et la confiance dans le Ciel font  
les héros."

SISMONDI.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,  
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1817.

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# KNIGHT OF ST. JOHN.

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## CHAPTER I.

THE Chevalier who led the reinforcement to St. Elmo, found congenial ardour in Giovanni; and, no sooner was he arrived, than a sally was determined and executed.

The new troops rushed from the fort, and, falling upon the Turks in their trenches, drove them out with prodigious slaughter. Quickly rallying, however, and supported by the whole strength of their camp, the enemy not only regained their lines, but, favoured by a strong wind, which blew back the smoke pro-

ceeding from the artillery of the fort, they possessed themselves of the counterscarp, and began to rain a fire of musquetry upon the ravelin.

When the smoke cleared, and discovered the Turkish colours flying on the counterscarp, (whence the Janizaries took murderous aim at every knight as he advanced,) some of the garrison called loudly for the immediate blowing up of this unfortunate work ; but, Giovanni not only abhorring such inglorious destruction, but desirous of checking the despondent spirit which prompted it, threw himself singly upon the enemy, crying out, “ Rather let us regain it !”

He was followed by the chevaliers only; but they, inflamed with honourable shame and setting life at nought, when compared with honour, rushed so impetuously upon the infidels that they were a second time driven beyond their trenches.

In such alternations of fortune passed

day after day: the Turks fought like tigers; and the besieged, like men who know the value of that for which they contend. But though the slaughter in the infidel camp was infinitely greater than that in the fort, the consequences were woefully disproportionate: for the Christians were becoming hourly more exposed by the shattered state of the fortress itself, and no reinforcements came to fill up the dismal chasms made in their ranks.

In this condition they heard with horror the thundering cannon which announced the arrival of Dragut with a fleet of gallies and 3000 fresh troops.

His presence soon announced itself by more terrible proofs; for Dragut's experimental knowledge in the science of sieges was even greater than that of Errard himself, then the military oracle of Europe; and the masterly dispositions the infidel now made, threatened soon to reduce the fort to a heap of ashes.

The venerable Dueguerras beheld these new arrangements with dismay: he saw too, with instant self-condemnation, four enormous culverins planted upon that parallel point, which Giovanni had so strenuously urged him to secure; and which now battered the flanks of his ravelin and cavalier with a fury that menaced the whole western side of the fort with destruction.

Even the sanguine spirit of the old knight must have fainted under these ill-boding appearances, had not the information he received from St. Angelo restored his hopes. Henri la Valette had returned from Sicily with the Viceroy's solemn promise of sending part, if not the whole of his fleet and army, in less than ten days, to the relief of the island. Cesario had remained in Sicily, to wait the arrival of Prince Doria, according to previous instructions; and his arguments, it was believed, would certainly expedite the succours.

Having communicated these gladdening tidings to his garrison, Dueguerras required them to call up their resolution, and defend themselves manfully, since their day of deliverance drew nigh.

The garrison, with one voice, expressed their determination of standing out to the last gasp of their lives; and each man then betook himself to his post.

In the middle of the second night after Dragut's appearance in the infidel camp, Giovanni was alarmed by an unusual noise, whilst in the act of applying a bandage to a severe wound which Rodolphe had got in the trenches the day before. He started from the ground on which he was kneeling, and at that moment a horrid shout and a volley of fire-arms assured him that the enemy were within the Christian lines. He threw the bandages to a serving-brother, and, giving Rodolphe a hasty benediction, rushed out amongst the combatants.

He found Ottomans and Christians mixed

together without the fort, in confused but horrid carnage : the enemy had discovered an entrance to the ravelin through a port-hole, and, getting from thence into the cavalier, had quickly overpowered the few soldiers defending it.

When Giovanni rushed into the open air, he found soldiers, knights, and serving-brothers all running in consternation towards the cavalier.

The struggle which followed was desperate : the enemy were repulsed with prodigious loss, and driven even beyond the ravelin : but every man that fell had thousands to supply his place ; while the wasted garrison of St. Elmo was like a tree shaken by autumnal blasts, which every fresh gust despoils to be replenished no more.

Giovanni was in all quarters of the fight with the celerity of thought ; and everywhere he saw the aged Dueguerras opposing his scarred breast to the scyme-



tars of the infidels. He would have urged him to retire; and with nearly filial tenderness besought him to do so; but the old man, reddening as he spoke, and pointing to the distant cape from which was pouring the storm of Dragut's culverins, said, "This is the only advice I will ever neglect again;" and he threw himself into the thick of the fight. The Turks, newly-reinforced, had by this time secured the ravelin, and returned to the attack of the cavalier; yet did the fort still hail upon them showers of balls and stones, and flaming pitch: at length the good cause triumphed, and they were once more beat back.

At the ravelin, however, they rallied; and, supported by constant accessions of force from their camp, were no longer to be dislodged. The counterscarp was covered with their slain, and so many of the knights had fallen, that both parties seemed tacitly to demand a suspension of arms.

Dueguerras himself was amongst the wounded: but he roused himself to examine the state of his garrison, and found it alarmingly reduced.

Two-thirds were either killed or disabled; and the infidels, growing in numbers, were now in possession of one of the principal outworks of the fort.

In the dead of the ensuing night he contrived to convey his wounded across the port to Il Borgo, and at the same time he prayed for a second reinforcement.

La Valette sent him what troops he could spare from the other fortresses; which, though not then in a state of actual siege, he was obliged to hold in momentary expectation of a surprise.

From this period the condition of the besieged grew daily more critical: the Turks, inspirited by the hardy counsels and skill of Dragut, and drawing prodigious advantages from their superiority in numbers and artillery, and their extended

position, baffled all the science of the engineers of the Order, and all the heroism of its knights.

Every living soul that went forth to repulse their fierce attacks, went self-devoted to death : they fell like so many appointed victims.

The grief of La Valette when he heard their fate, was as poignant as his admiration of their constancy was fervent ; and so impatient was he for the relief of this suffering garrison, that no sooner was Cesario arrived with Prince Doria's assurance of joining the Sicilian fleet, than he was sent back again to urge the instant appearance of both fleets, and to paint the desperate situation of St. Elmo.

In contempt of imminent danger, Cesario continued to cross the channel in a bark so slight that it was scarcely able to weather the frequent gales which assailed it. In getting out and into port, which he always contrived at night, he dared the perpetual risk of being taken

by the enemy's cruisers ; but the Grand Master depended on his skill and his zeal ; and though Cesario panted for closer action, and thought chiefly of Giovanni, he believed it his duty to continue that irksome but useful service.

His suspicions of the Viceroy's sincerity, now amounted to absolute certainty ; for Prince Doria doubted it ; and had wrung his hands in bitterness of soul, when he received the Seigniory's positive orders not to risk his gallies by an indiscreet attempt to succour Malta unless previously joined by the ships of Spain.

The Grand Master himself began now to dismiss all expectation from that quarter : but it was necessary not to disclose this opinion, lest the courage of his different garrisons should sink at once. He therefore dispatched Cesario again to Sicily, as if to press the succours ; but in reality to raise money upon the various possessions of the Order in Italy,

with which he must hire troops and transports, and buy ammunition.

Meanwhile the Turks advanced in such numbers to the attack of the defences of St. Elmo, that they had already run up the ravelin so high as to overlook the parapet of the place, and were beginning to undermine the wall.

By the aid of a temporary bridge, they got over the ditch which lay between them and the wall, and clapping their scaling ladders to it, made a show as if they would storm the fort at once.

Giovanni, who was at that moment standing on the highest battlement to observe the plans of the enemy, saw all the garrison rushing, as if by one impulse, to the place threatened. He called loudly on them to stop; for he was convinced it was a stratagem.

From his elevated position, he saw the whole range of Turkish artillery levelled in that direction. His voice was unheard: the rashly gallant men

presented themselves in a body upon the rampart, and as immediately disappeared under the fire of those dreadful batteries; they fell, as if a scythe had mowed them down with a stroke.

Giovanni rushed from the battlements to the wall; and there he beheld, indeed, the slaughter he had foreseen.

On emerging from the postern of the fort, he was struck and wounded in the forehead by the splinter of a cuirass; but scarcely feeling the acute pain it gave, he advanced towards the scene of destruction. While he held his blood-streaming head downwards, he stood mute with anguish, looking upon the lifeless bodies of all that brave phalanx. Feeble accents from a heap of slain roused him from his mournful trance; and, wiping away the blood that flowed over his dimmed eyes, he stooped to extricate the wounded knight!

It was Cynthio Doria: the unhappy young man grasped Giovanni's hand

with death and anguish in his face, at the same time faltering out, — “ I cannot live, Cigala ; take me into the chapel ; I would die there, sinner that I am ! — there, perhaps — Heaven —— ” his senses forsook him at these words ; but Giovanni, hoping that life might yet be recalled, lifted him from the ground, and bore him in his arms to the chapel of the fort.

The motion, and the brisker current of air, through which he was carried, brought Cynthio back to sense ; the few religious attached to the garrison were saying mass for the success of their warring brethren ; and Giovanni, delivering up to them his sad burden, was about to return to the rampart, when the dying man feebly detained him. “ Stay a moment in Christian charity ! ” he gasped out, in intermitting accents ; “ tell my poor father that I die lamenting my many offences against him. If

my life has disgraced his noble name, my death, I hope, ——”

Articulation failed him at that instant; he turned his dim and glazing eyes feebly towards the symbol of redemption upon the altar, and, closing them again, his hand just pressed, and then dropped that of Giovanni.

The latter retained him upon his breast a few moments afterwards, and his eyes rested awhile upon the altered face with an expression of awe and regret: then, fetching a sigh fraught with many remembrances, he transferred the body to the chaplains, and returned to his duty.

By the time he reached the rampart again, he found the enemy had most inexplicably withdrawn, and the surviving knights busily employed in removing the corpses of their companions.

Dueguerras was standing in the midst, tears coursing one another down his furrowed cheeks, as he watched with a



fixed gaze the progress of their dismal work. He wept the fate of so much bravery and youth ; but he contemplated without one throb of fear his own almost certain fall under the same swords.

Penetrated with sorrow for the fallen, and believing it his duty to save the survivors if possible, he asked Giovanni if he would undertake to cross to St. Angelo, and represent their state once more to La Valette ; showing him the necessity they were under of immediately evacuating the fortress, if they would not perish in the impossible attempt of resisting an assault.

“ I cannot be the bearer of such a message,” replied Giovanni, leaning on his sword, overcome with sickness from the wound which he was stanching with his handkerchief.

“ You are wounded, I see !” exclaimed Dueguerras, misinterpreting his answer ; “ go and be taken care of — I

must find another messenger." Giovanni bowed his head without speaking; and retired abruptly.

Happily for him, the fever consequent on this wound disabled him so completely, that he gave no countenance by his presence to the desperate councils which followed.

The Grand Master replied to the first representation of the besieged, after the destruction on the rampart, by the most pathetic lamentations over their sufferings and losses; but also with strong arguments in support of his opinion, that the whole island depended upon the protracted holding out of St. Elmo; and by entreaties that its defenders would new-string their courage, and rely upon his fatherly anxiety to recruit them with men and provisions, to the extent of his limited power.

This reply was received with indignation by more than half the garrison: they considered themselves wantonly de-

voted to slaughter, since the delay of the Sicilian succours rendered their relief nearly impossible ; and, believing that sooner or later the fort must fall, they accused their Grand Master of savage indifference in thus exacting a fruitless waste of their lives.

The malcontents, unknown to their Governor, drew up a memorial of grievances, declaring their resolution (in case the Grand Master refused them permission to evacuate the fort,) to sally from it sword in hand, and perish at once in fair fight, rather than stay to be butchered in cold blood by their barbarian conquerors.

One of their members bore this memorial to St. Angelo. He returned after a short absence, accompanied by three senior knights, commissioned to ascertain the strength of the place ; and he brought an indignant answer from La Valette.

When this awful answer was read

aloud to the assembled malcontents, each man bent his head in shame and remorse: at every indignant line, they fancied they met the penetrating eye of their father and prince, overwhelming them with a sense of their own baseness and his disdain.

In this justly-severe letter, he called on them to remember, that when they took the habit of St. John, they took on themselves an obligation to surrender up their judgments and wills into the experienced hands of their master: he bade them remember, that they had other duties to perform, besides those of rushing into battle; that they must practise patience and obedience, and trust in God; and that if it were his Divine will that they should stand and meet death at their posts, they were bound to await it cheerfully.

“What hope ye,” he asked in a flame of noble indignation, “from a removal to Il Borgo? Do you expect that the

Viceroy of Sicily will hasten to the succour of men who basely desert themselves? What, then, is to prevent the enemy from attacking the very place you are so eager to run into for shelter? Will your hearts grow stouter for being in Il Borgo? No! you will fall there as surely as on Mount Sceberras; and fall disgraced; or you will live still more dishonorably, a second time deserters from duty."

These reproaches touched every one of the offenders to the quick, reviving in most a sense of honour and of shame. But a few remained obstinately rebellious; and in spite of all the indulgent things said by two of the commissioners to soothe them into obedience, they persisted in averring that the Turks would either entirely demolish the fort by the aid of that prodigious work which they had raised above the ravelin, and from which they poured a continual storm of fire; or they would blow it into the air.

at once, by springing the mine which they were rapidly running under the first parapet.

This last argument was disproved by the nature of the rock itself, which increased so much in hardness as it advanced in depth, that only madmen could doubt the certain failure of the Turkish engineers on that subject.

The other argument was not to be treated lightly ; and two of the commissioners answered it rather by motives of honour and duty to remain at all risks, than united in the extravagant assertions of their hot-headed associate Castriot, that the fort was not merely tenable for much longer, but capable of new and formidable defences.

The pertinacity and overbearing language of Castriot irritated even those among the knights who were most sincere in the intention of submitting to whatever the Grand Master should command ; and some very young brothers,

drawing their swords in the heat of passion, a disgraceful scene of contention would have followed, had not Giovanni, enquiring the cause of the violent uproar as he reclined in the hospital-room, started up, and with happy presence of mind ordered an alarm to be sounded.

This feint succeeded : for at that sound every knight ran to his post, expecting to see the infidels mounting the walls.

Till this moment Giovanni was ignorant of the rebellious remonstrance of the malcontents : he got now, by a strong effort, to the gate of the fort, where he saw the commissioners hurrying out with Dueguerras to engage in the repulse. Arresting the veteran by his cloke, he exclaimed, “ Pardon my temerity, Father ! I heard the humiliating contention, and it was I who ordered that alarm to be sounded.”

“ Ever the best and wisest !” exclaimed Dueguerras, interrupting him, and catch-

ing him in his arms; "look at him, my friends," he continued: "wan and worn as he is, had I but twenty such, I would defend these crumbling walls against a host."

Giovanni bowed his face to hide the honest exultation which flushed it at this irrepressible encomium. "Mine is a partial governor," he said, after a moment's pause to steady his voice; "Chevaliers, I but pray you to report me as one determined never to quit this rock but in obedience to the Grand Master."

He did not wait for reply, but hurrying from their commendations left them to pursue their now-unobstructed return to Il Borgo.



## CHAPTER II.

A SHALLOP from St. Angelo, by day-break the next morning, decided the conduct of the garrison: it came charged with a letter from the Grand Master, written in a strain of cold displeasure less supportable than the sharpest rebuke.

He accepted their resignation, bidding them prepare to resign their places to other soldiers: he added, that so far from finding any difficulty in providing persons to supersede them, his only anxiety was how to choose best, from the number of brave men who came in crowds from less exposed fortresses, nay from the very cultivation of the fields, to demand a post in St. Elmo.

He told them that, at midnight, boats would arrive with part of the new garrison; and he therefore exhorted those who evinced such a love of inglorious life, to return in those boats without delay.

“ They will come, my brethren !” exclaimed Giovanni, who was present at the reading of this piercing letter; “ they will defend St. Elmo; and we shall call in vain for the rocks to cover us !”

A general murmur of shame and repentance ran through the assembly.

“ Go who will,” cried the Governor, striking his *baton* on the table, “ no boat shall carry this withered body across yon water, but as a conqueror or a corse !”

By the same impulse the offending knights threw themselves at the feet of their intrepid Governor, imploring forgiveness, and declaring their wish to share his fate. “ Obtain for us the Grand Master’s pardon,” they cried, “ and we

will wash out our offences in the best blood of our enemies."

Dueguerras pressed them severally in his arms, bedewing them with tears ; and, assuring them that their moment of rebellion was forgotten, hastened to represent their contrition to La Valette.

More than one messenger passed between the forts of St. Angelo and St. Elmo, before the Grand Master allowed himself to relax from his necessary severity ; and his forgiveness was obtained at last, only by such repeated submission from the knights as convinced him he might now depend upon their firmness.

Each man, indeed, had made up his mind to self-sacrifice for the general good ; and in this spirit, under the devouring fire of the sun and of the enemy, they persisted in erecting new works as fast as the old ones were destroyed.

Giovanni, under skilful hands, was soon able to take an active share in these

labours ; and, whether combating sword in hand in the trenches, or directing the cannon from the batteries, or attending the sick and wounded in the hospital, he was equally the inspirer of noble ambition, and the object of emulation to his associates.

No one, who saw him passing from post to post, with a step as light as his countenance was animated, could have guessed that under that show of cheerful confidence there lay the settled conviction of their destruction. He was too well versed in the most scientific part of the military profession, not to calculate to a certainty the chances for and against their power of maintaining the fort.

Without the seige were raised before a given period, he knew it must fall : not even supernatural courage could prevent its being destroyed under the inexhaustible and unceasing fire of the enemy. But what of that ? The safety of the Order, and of the whole island, depended

upon their keeping that enemy at bay as long as possible ; and it was therefore their duty to do so, though with the positive certainty of destruction to themselves.

They were now, he thought, literally called upon " to lay down their lives for the brethren," not wantonly and vain-gloriously, for the sake of worldly applause, but in obedience to the highest commands of *Him* who sealed that command by his sacred example.

Thus Giovanni mounted the walls of St. Elmo as he would have gone to the stake ; believing himself called to martyrdom for a great and glorious object, and confidently anticipating the starry crown promised " to them who endure to the end."

But one human affection clogged his soul's heaven-ward flight : Cesario's image still presented itself ; and anxious friendship fancied many a probable scene

of that friend's future life, torturing to imagine.

Giovanni yearned to behold that erring but still dear Cesario again ; and had not the latter's absence in Sicily prevented it, perhaps he might have urged La Valette to appoint him a post in St. Elmo.

As it was, Giovanni thought of the hazardous service in which Cesario was placed, with extreme solicitude : for now the cruisers of Dragut were scattered about the seas between Sicily and Malta, with the express purpose of intercepting the convoy of stores expected by the Grand Master under the guidance of Cesario.

Already had two gallies so laden, under another commander, gone back to the Sicilian port from which they had sailed, even after they had nearly reached Malta : their conduct, though justifiable in ordinary situations, was so severely reprobated by La Valette, who never ceased

exhorting all within his influence to risk every thing in a conjuncture like the present, that Giovanni was convinced Cesario would rather run direct into the cannon's mouth, than turn back from his course.

Indifferent to his own life, Giovanni could not be so to that of one so interwoven with his dearest remembrances; and many and fervent were the prayers he offered up for that cherished friend's ultimate preservation.

Meanwhile the operations of the enemy proceeded with greater vigour than ever: the shameful delay of the Italian forces, which plunged the Maltese in despair, inspirited the infidels; they began to blush at being kept so long before an imperfect fort, which only a handful of men defended. The Basha Mustapha determined therefore to lay aside every scheme for its slower reduction, and assault it in good earnest with his whole force.

Having previously devoted a day to battering the walls, without a moment's intermission; and having succeeded in laying a breach open to the very rock itself; on the morning of the 16th of July, the Turkish fleet suddenly appeared before the sea-front of the fort; and, while their artillery, and the land-battery of Cape Dragut, thundered upon the southern and eastern end, the whole Turkish army marched to the assault on the north and west.

They advanced in the midst of a hideous dissonance of appalling sounds, which disgraced the name of martial music, but which might have frozen blood less warmed by generous ardour than that of the besieged.

It is the province of the historian to give the details of this fierce contest: the firm rank of knights was said to oppose a second wall behind that now broken, to the sabres of the infidels; and when that living bulwark was gapped and broken



down in parts by the multitude of the enemy, each individual knight and soldier threw himself on the besiegers, singling out his opponent, and quitting him not, till one or both fell dead.

Yet how ineffectual seemed every single conquest, when such hosts were to be subdued! Sheltered by the fire of all their batteries, the Turkish arquebusiers rushed in crowds into the trenches, and there sent their winged deaths amongst Christians.

So sure was their aim, that they were exulting with shouts of victory, when suddenly a band of knights appeared, with each a new and dreadful instrument of destruction in his hand; advancing with terrible rapidity, they threw them amid the enemy, and as quickly ran back to hurl down those who had already mounted the wall.

These circles of fire composed of combustible hoops dipped in blazing oils,

filled the trenches with a horrid light, while the shrieks and groans of the miserable wretches expiring of the torments they caused, disputed the superiority of horror between sight and sound.

The flames of these dreadful fire-wheels and the flashes of so many pieces of ordnance, covered the whole rock of St. Elmo with fire; while, on the opposite side of the great port, the batteries of St. Angelo and the Isle de la Sangle, thundering across the harbour upon the enemy's lines, showed, by their momentary illuminations, the anxious garrisons of each, watching the fate of St. Elmo.

This fierce assault began in the darkness of night, and continued till noon; when the intense heat, the fatigue of both parties, and above all the flagging spirits of the infidels, combined to terminate it.

Above two thousand of the latter strewed the ground; and the Basha,

finding that no authority could, that day, force his men to a second encounter with the fire-wheels, ordered a retreat to be sounded.

At that sound, the triumphant shout of the besieged was re-echoed by one from St. Angelo and St. Michael; and La Valette himself was seen by the side of the grand standard, with his arms extended towards St. Elmo, as if by that action he wished to tell them that they were again restored to his affections.

At this affecting sight, a second shout, but less tumultuous and more thrilling than the first, rent the air: an impressive pause succeeded; after which the surviving warriors hastened to fulfil their sad duty to the wounded and dead.

Sad indeed was the task! for there lay kinsmen, and friends, and fellow-soldiers, never to rise again!

They who lifted their mangled corpses, and committed them to the ground, might have wept over such dismal havoc;

had not the belief of being soon called to follow them given a solemn check to lamentation.

They looked with tearless eyes upon each well-known face, as it disappeared under the mould they were heaping over it ; but many a deep-drawn sigh testified but too truly, how far from hard indifference were the brave hearts from which those sighs were drawn.

The boats which conveyed the wounded to St. Angelo returned with a reinforcement of volunteers, gallantly devoting themselves to death, in emulation of those who were now deaf to the voice of human applause.

Such a remnant of the garrison remained, that but for this voluntary band La Valette knew the fort could not have held out a day longer. Still indulging, however, some faint hope of the Sicilian succours, or at least of being able to defend the island till the stormy season, when the breath of heaven would blow

the enemy from their shores, he durst not yield to the cry of his tenderer feelings, which urged him to save these gallant men from their impending fate.

A severe duty called on him to vanquish himself; and while in secret he wept and sorrowed over these successive victims, in public he wore a face of ardour and encouragement and confidence.

Enraged at the successful landing of this reinforcement, in defiance of all his efforts to prevent it, the Basha's fury exceeded all bounds: he called a council of war, where it was determined, that new works should be immediately constructed, so as to hem in the fort of St. Elmo on every side, and make it impossible for La Valette to succour it either with men or provisions from the town; while by sea all assistance should be cut off by the gallies stationed before the entrance of the port.

This plan, in despite of the most intrepid sallies of the besieged, was quickly executed. A formidable sweep of batteries extending down to the very edge of the great port on one side, and of the lesser port on the other, shut in the devoted fort, and shut out hope.

This work completed, the infidels rushed again to the walls, which now presented not one breach, but many! O breaches nobly stopped; with mortal bodies it is true, but invincible souls!

Thrice came the infidels on, and as often were they driven back: the blood ran off those floated ramparts like the sheeted rain of thunder-storms. The dying curses of infidels mingled with the dying prayers of Christians; and the last pressure of kindred lips upon the clammy ones of expiring warriors, was seen, but not heard, amid that dismal uproar.

Again, the disgraced Ottomans were beaten beyond the trenches; which,

however, were left unmaintained by the besieged, for want of soldiers.

The Turks now drew back upon their camp to breathe for the night; leaving the afflicted garrison to collect their wounded, and count their few surviving numbers.

Alas, there was scarcely one who could be called more than the remnant of himself! Those who were not deprived of some limb, were disfigured by hideous wounds, and scarcely able to drag their suffering bodies through the laborious offices of the night.

The aged Dueguerras dug with his own hand the grave of more than one of his brave garrison; while Giovanni, whom some good angel had miraculously protected through the storm of the assault, and the dangers which he courted, dressed the wounds of those that yet lived, and soothed each parting spirit with the consolations of religion.

Rodolphe was amongst the survivors; and though Giovanni saw the dark goal to which all their glory tended, he felt a thrill of pleasure at hearing his poor follower's praise.

Rodolphe had saved the lesser standard of the Order on the cavalier; and thrown himself with such intrepidity, singly, amongst whole bodies of the enemy, that Dueguerras did not hesitate to assure him, that if they lived to meet the Grand Master, he should claim for him the honourable title of a serving brother, — a distinction, from which, according to the strict rules of the Order, the meanness of his birth must otherwise have excluded him.

Rodolphe's feelings were overpowered by this unexpected good fortune; for, as his mind opened, he became more sensitive to the opinion of others; and now, transported with joy, he embraced the knees of the Governor and of Giovanni, unable to articulate his thanks.



Rather exhausted by fatigue, than by the pain of his many but unimportant flesh-wounds, the poor fellow was at last persuaded to retire and seek a short refreshment : his example was followed by all the inferior soldiers, leaving the few surviving knights to consult with their Governor.

His council-hall was the dismal scene of their last contest : a faint gleam of yet lingering day glimmered over their dejected figures, as each stood leaning on his pike, with grief and perplexity in his looks.

Nearly all of them had their heads, or limbs, or bodies swathed in recent bandages ; the white linen of which woefully matched their pale faces : and as they leant their unsteady figures with all their weight upon weapons now too feeble to support them, they seemed the slowly-sinking spectres of those knights whose yet unburied bodies lay scattered round.

“ They are fast lopping our few withering branches !” said Dueguerras, after a long and dismal silence, while he held out the stump of that arm with which he had vainly grasped the standard Rodolphe afterwards recovered. “ They will have laid the axe to the root, ere the next set of the sun that has just sunk to *his* bed of rest ! How many of us remain ? One—two—three——I’ll count no more !” exclaimed the old man, interrupting himself with a burst of anguish, his eye rapidly outrunning his calculation. He turned away to conceal his gushing tears.

Giovanni followed him. “ Father !” he cried with great emotion, pressing the shaking arm of Dueguerras, “ time presses ; we cannot defend this fort a single instant, if the enemy attack it again before we are reinforced : it is not a question of our lives—they go with the next hour ; but the fort must be preserved.”

“Good heaven!—preserved!” repeated Dueguerras, raising his afflicted countenance, “look there—there!” and he pointed to the triple lines of Turkish batteries, commanding every part of the two shores. “How are reinforcements to land under those batteries? and how are we to get a single boat across the port to tell our wretched tale to La Valette?”

“I’ll swim it!” cried Giovanni, in a voice which made every heart thrill.

It was some minutes ere he could make Dueguerras comprehend the practicability of this bold measure; the success of which must rest chiefly upon his extraordinary bodily strength. The risk was imminent; but the necessity was yet more urgent; and all impatient of delay, Giovanni received the few instructions from his Governor, and breaking away, flew along a path shaded by mounds of earth, down to the beach.

One clear gleam was in the sky, as he sprang naked into the water, dividing with vigorous strokes its turbulent waves.

The agitated friends he had left standing on the rampart of St. Elmo watched his fateful progress by that gradually-extinguishing gleam, and with hearts so anxious that minutes comprised the tortures of hours.

His white and polished limbs in the midst of that black mass of water was too striking an object to be unmarked by the enemy. One of their sentinels, mistaking the glittering appearance for a sea-fowl, wantonly discharged his piece in that direction. At that moment, the same impulse checked by the same action the sudden cry of all upon the rampart. Giovanni, with admirable presence of mind, dived for an instant or two below the surface of the water; and when he rose again, the closing clouds had just shut in the only gleam.

of light, and the sentinel was turned another way.

Giovanni then exerted all his strength; and, vigorously breasting the waves, gained the shore.

## CHAPTER III.

WHILE the garrison of St. Elmo were thus contending with super-human courage against a growing host, Cesario was on the sea, joyfully conducting, as he believed, certain succour to Malta.

This consisted of two gallies filled with gentlemen, and knights from their distant commanderies; and two transports bearing Spanish troops. This meagre reinforcement was to be considered a pledge for the whole Sicilian fleet, which should arrive as soon as the various regiments and supplies could be got on board the different vessels.

But, unhappily for Cesario's hopes, the command of these few auxiliaries was given to Don Juan Cardona, with

private instructions not to land the soldiers nor risk the shipping, if he should receive any news by the way of an unfavourable nature.

The critical state of St. Elmo being hastily given to him with all the exaggerations of vulgar fear by a fisherman, Cardona, in obedience to the positive commands of his court, instead of making for the island, stood out to sea, irresolute whether to return to Messina, or hover about the channel.

In vain Cesario remonstrated against this conduct; Cardona assured him, that his instructions were peremptory for avoiding an action with the Turkish fleet; and in addition to that, he confessed a private reason, the force of which, he flattered himself, no man could deny. The wife of Felix di Toledo was on board his ship. Cardona was her uncle; and, overcome by her importunities, he had consented to secrete her and her maid in his cabin, and convey them to Malta.

He was however of too weak a character for consistency in kindness ; and, afraid of being reproached for running his ships into danger, only to gratify his private affections, he now burst out into pettish exclamations, devoutly giving all women, and wives especially, to the devil.

Cesario was sensibly affected by this proof of Donna Camilla's conjugal tenderness ; for though he could not justify her taking such a hazardous step without her husband's permission, he understood how easily a fond heart might be bewildered between real and imagined duties ; and how much a passionate desire of sharing the dangers, and watching over the probable ills of a beloved object, might blind her sense to that increase of his perils and anxieties which must follow her arrival.

The siege also had been drawn out so long beyond the period expected for its conclusion, that he was not quite sure Toledo would sincerely wish his wife



had been less adventurous : he therefore wished for both their sakes that she could be landed ; and he urged every argument in his power to induce Cardona to disregard the false or exaggerated statement of the fisherman.

His heart was all in tumults lest he should arrive too late to share Giovanni's bed of honourable death, (for, alas ! he dare no longer encourage the hope of seeing St. Elmo relieved) ; and his tenderest sympathies were excited for the interesting young creature who was so devotedly throwing herself, for a husband's sake, into the midst of perils hideous but to imagine.

Cesario's acquaintance with Toledo had been short, it is true ; but frequent opportunity of observation stands in the place of months and years ; and he had fortunately seen the noble Spaniard in situations where the inmost character must rise to light.

From every trial he had seen Toledo's

sterling heart come out like tried and pure gold. During their harassing march along the coast, his manly neglect of every personal comfort, and his delicate attention to that of others, rivetted Cesario's regard: he saw him, after the most fatiguing and dispiriting service, go forth amongst the men, to inspect their accommodations and attend to their complaints. Nay, the very brute creation had a friend in Toledo; and many was the wounded war-horse, which his humane and skilful hand cherished into health again.

These may seem trifling acts of humanity; yet, perhaps, it is from such minor acts that we can best judge of the soul's spontaneous movements, and are most powerfully attracted to love the person who displays them.

In the field, and at the military council, Toledo evinced qualities of a cast demanding respect as well as affection. On these occasions the greatest valour

coupled with discretion and the soundest judgment, unwarped even by a romantic passion for glory worthy the first days of chivalry, distinguished him from every other warrior.

Thus, in a moment, he passed from the amiable to the admirable ; from the careless, unpretending, amusing companion, to the firm and enlightened counsellor.

In both characters Cesario admired him ; and scarcely knew whether he liked him best, when, lightening the hours of their stated watch, he recited or chanted a Provençal romance, or, when severely thoughtful, he delivered opinions as valuable in themselves as important to the cause he investigated.

This esteem for Toledo's character was heightened by the interesting nature of his private situation ; and convinced that no event could bestow more happiness upon him than that of his wife's

voluntary arrival, Cesario longed to lead her to him through every obstacle.

As Cesario had left an agent of the Grand Master's at Messina, to employ the money and equip the recruits he had succeeded in raising, he felt authorised to make his own immediate way to Il Borgo: he therefore proposed the enterprise to the knights and gentlemen on board, who were all eager to adventure every thing for the attainment of the general wish.

Cardona could not refuse the boat they demanded for this purpose; but, sincerely apprehensive of their destruction, he endeavoured to dissuade them from so daring an attempt. He expostulated in vain: in vain he magnified the dangers they were about to brave, for no other object than that of losing their lives fruitlessly the next hour, on the walls of the fated fortress. He spoke to resolute men whom nothing could change; and he was to be conquered.

Cesario meanwhile conveyed a billet to Donna Camilla, briefly telling her of their intended desperate method of attempting a landing ; and offering her his protection in case she had courage to encounter the alarm of such an effort, and to trust to his experience and resolution.

Their boat was just launched, and Cesario already in it, when Camilla and her attendant appeared. She had broken from her timid uncle's mingled arguments and threatenings, with the sudden strength of wildly-exalted feelings, and now sprang into the boat, under the darkness of a thick fog, with as much eagerness as if she were springing through the gates of heaven.

A veil entirely concealed her face and figure, as she sat silent, trembling with a little fear, but more anxiety, near Cesario, who guided the rudder.

He was now so familiar with the creeks and rocks of the island, that, so far from

dreading the increasing fog, he blessed it as their shield and security ; and, happily screened by it from the observation of the enemy, and favoured by the tide, he drifted silently through their very fleet into the great port.

No sooner were they landed, than taking Donna Camilla and her faithful attendant under his own care, he proceeded to Toledo's quarters, having previously dispatched one of the chevaliers to apprise him of their arrival.

Donna Camilla's impatience made her nearly outstrip his messenger ; for when they came in sight of her husband's residence, and no sooner was it pointed out to her by Cesario, than, breaking from his supporting arm, she flew like a lapwing into the court of the building. He followed quickly, and got up to her in time to see her throw herself upon her husband's neck in the porch of the building.

But though the strong light of a lamp

suspended above, shone full upon her figure, and though her veil was fallen off, he only caught a glimpse of a youthful face, all tears and transport ; and saw a figure, light as air, in defiance of a circumstance which rendered it more interesting in the eye of a husband.

It was long ere Don Felix was sufficiently master of his joyfully-amazed senses to move from the position in which her first action had placed him. He held her locked in his arms, scarcely breathing ; his lips fondly sealed upon the back of her white neck, as she lay with her face buried on his shoulder.

When he found that she made no answer to his whispered blessings, he raised her gently ; and, finding that she had fainted, called Cesario to assist him in bearing her into his apartment.

Cesario did so ; and having waited to see some signs of returning life, he left them to themselves.

The first person Cesario met after this,

answered his eager question of, whether St. Elmo still held out, by telling him its desperate situation.

Giovanni, after breathing awhile, when his gloomy errand was told, had swam back to inform the garrison that numbers had volunteered for their reinforcement; and that boats were then preparing to attempt their passage across the port.

“O, had I been but one hour sooner!” exclaimed Cesario, with a pang of disappointment; and, rushing down to the shore by the light of a few cautiously shaded torches, he saw those heroic men who were about to court death in every shape, tumultuously getting into the boats.

“Where is the Grand Master?” he cried, throwing himself into one of the smallest shallops; “but this is no time to wait for leave—Off—off—push off!” His own hand performed the office he demanded; and, pushing before the little fleet, he led the way from eagerness, not



ambition; not even the ambition of glory animated him; his whole soul was fixed on friendship and Giovanni.

The night was still dark; but there was light enough along the lines of the enemy, to show their dreadful preparation. The whole shore, indeed, was lined with artillery, and the mouth of the port blocked up by triple rows of gallies. In advance of these were posted a lighter squadron filled with musqueteers and archers; so that from the seaside, the slender shallops of the knights were exposed to the operations of the Turkish navy. As long as the forts of St. Angelo and St. Elmo remained in the hands of the Order, and maintained the chain which crossed the entrance of the harbour, the vessels of the infidels could not pass to take absolute possession of the port; but the fire of their guns could not be excluded; and they raked the little forlorn hope of gallant spirits in

every direction, while in front it received the whole thunder of the enemy's camp and land batteries.

Yet undismayed, the chevaliers persisted in attempting to weather that storm of death. Animated by the sight of their brave companions on the rampart of St. Elmo, who were seen clad in their white and scarlet subrevests, standing in the midst of those sulphureous clouds which rose in volumes from the shore to the very pinnacle of the rock; animated by their appearance and their encouraging gestures, this adventurous band made the most desperate efforts to join them. Some rashly ran their boat a-ground under the very guns of the enemy, hoping to cut their way through their lines; others threw themselves into the sea, endeavouring to gain the foot of the rock by swimming; others again, with frantic cries and gestures, seemed questioning the decrees of heaven; while a few humbly knelt in their shallops,

as if to supplicate Divine assistance for their devoted brethren.

Cesario was the first that leaped into the sea: he thought he saw Giovanni, and he did see him, directing the fire of some guns upon the enemy, near the only spot where a landing was practicable.

At that imagination, he sprang into the waves, crying out, "I come, Giovanni!"

Giovanni's blood thrilled to that piercing sound—that sound so long unheard—that sound at once welcome, and the only one that could make him feel the pang of fear: he ran to the beach, followed by Rodolphe; but Cesario was not fated to reach him. A well-aimed and heavy stone struck him on the shoulder, and his right arm, with which he was stemming the waves, fell powerless under water. His immediately sinking showed that he was deprived of sense; but at that moment Henri La Valette, who had observed him,

dragged him into his boat, and rowed away.

All this was the work of an instant ; and Giovanni had rushed half into the sea, when, seeing Cesario safe, and recollecting his own duty, he drew back, exclaiming in agonized accents, "Is there no man who will swim to yonder boat, and tell Cesario Adimari that my heart is bursting to reach him !"

"I will !" cried Rodolphe, starting forward. Giovanni caught the faithful Cahet as he flew,— "Bear him this last embrace !" he cried, and giving him one convulsive pressure, as if it were indeed Cesario that he held, he turned with the feelings of a man who has made his last sacrifice, to regain his station on the walls.

From that awful station he beheld the fearful scene of the unfortunate boats : but two were now visible of all that had dared the passage ; and they were hastily steering back to the opposite

shore, through showers of balls which threatened every moment to send them after their wretched companions.

Giovanni strained his eyes to watch the fearful progress of the little barks: but dark themselves, they were soon beyond the reach of distant lights; and Giovanni could but guess at their safety, when he heard two faint shouts, repeated after short intervals, from the quarter of the town.

Hoping all things, as we are instructed to do, he then turned with a thankful though trembling heart to his other duties.

In the spirit of those immortal heroes who laid down their lives at Thermopylæ a willing sacrifice, the self-devoted garrison prepared for certain death: distinctions were all laid aside: each soldier could boast as scarred a breast, and as brave a heart within it, as that of the noblest knight who commanded him; and having partaken, therefore, in com-

mon of the last solemn rite of Christians, they all embraced, for the last time, in this world. After this, they betook themselves to their post. Even the wounded and the sick prayed to find death, not by lingering pain or murderous blows in their beds, but where they had so often sought it, in front of the enemy: they were therefore placed in the ranks with their less disabled associates.

Thus passed that dismal night.

When day dawned, the infidels came on to the assault with the fury and the yells of demons. What was to withstand them? Not a ruined fortress, beaten almost to the ground!—not a handful of bleeding and dismembered men, whose brave souls were already flitting away!

Yet did these unconquerable men continue to fill up the breach with their bodies, till one by one they fell under the ruthless battle-axes of the enemy.

“This terrible assault,” says the historian, “was discontinued only for want

of combatants, it not ending, but with the death of the last knight. The Turkish fleet then entered the great port in triumph, their cannon firing, their trumpets sounding, and all the infidels shouting for joy."

## CHAPTER IV.

HAPPILY for Cesario, he remained in a state of stupor almost amounting to insensibility, till long after the fall of St. Elmo. On recovering perfect consciousness, the first object his eyes encountered was Rodolphe.

The presence of the Cahet excited an instant hope of his master, and with wild transport Cesario pronounced Giovanni's name.

At that name Rodolphe threw himself upon the ground, answering only by a groan.

Cesario was iced to his inmost soul; but suddenly starting up, he called out, "Tell me the worst!"

One near them, who knew not the un-



happy young man's individual interest in St. Elmo, immediately related the fate of the fort, and the slaughter of its garrison.

He added to this tale, the frightful fact — O shame to humanity! — of the Basha's impotent revenge.

That ferocious monster had ordered the bodies of such as were found with remaining life, to be ripped open, and their hearts torn out. Upon those already dead, in horrid mockery of their sacred badge, he commanded gashes to be cut in the form of a cross; then tying those insulted remnants of so many heroes to planks of wood, he cast them into the sea, leaving them to be washed by the tide to the very foot of St. Angelo.

At this dreadful recital, Cesario fell back a second time, insensible to every thing. The cries of Rodolphe at last roused him: he opened his eyes once more, and slowly recollecting the horrors to which he had before listened, he fixed

a withering look upon Rodolphe, asking him in a stern voice, what brought him there.

Rodolphe hastened to account for this apparent desertion of the master for whom he would willingly have died a thousand deaths.

The violence of his grief would scarcely allow him to articulate ; but at length he faltered through a short recital of their last interview at the foot of Mount Sceberras.

“ O give me that sad, that dear embrace !” cried Cesario, dissolving into tears, and trying once more to rise and receive it. The Cahet threw himself upon his breast with that familiarity which companionship in the same grief renders sacred.

Cesario pressed him against his heart, with the only arm he could now use, and so strongly, that it seemed as if he would have had him grow there.

It was long, long ere either of them

could speak : when they did so, Cesario said with a rending sigh, “ We must never part again, Rodolphe ; you are my Giovanni’s legacy ; and we will lay down our desolated lives together.”

Rodolphe had no voice to answer. In sorrow he was still the undisciplined child of nature : and though he had learned many noble lessons from the example of his master, he had not yet learned to bow his whole soul in submission to the seemingly-hard decrees of Providence.

While he wept and beat his breast, in stormy agony, Cesario lay motionless on his pallet, his hands clasped over his body, and his eyes fixed on heaven, in silent communion with the beatified spirit of his friend.

To him, even this moment of anguish had its balm : for in it, he had been told, not only of Giovanni’s forgiveness, but of his unabated affection. What, then, was to make Giovanni’s removal from

this earthly tabernacle a grief to his surviving friend? Let but Cesario hasten to lose his life, as he had done whom he lamented, and their souls would meet, and spring into each other, in regions of everlasting joy!

This exaltation of feeling was interrupted by sounds from without, to which no name may be given: they were nor groans nor cries, but they smote the heart through the ear, and spoke of woe and horror.

Cesario quickly comprehended their import: his eyes sought those of Rodolphe, where the ghastly expression of his, was reflected. He started from his couch, and tried to reach the door; but, enfeebled by foregone exertion, and the anguish of his contusion, he dropt upon the threshold. Rodolphe passed without seeing him.

Winged with a dreadful hope, the Cahet flew down to the beach; there he saw a crowd of mournful faces. Towns-

men and warriors stood mute and motionless, watching the sullen motion of the tide, as it heaved-in the several corses of their martyred companions.

An individual or general murmur of grief followed the nearer view of each floating body. Some were the remains of unknown volunteers ; some, of the intrepid peasantry ; some, of the oldest and dearest of their brethren. Women and children were seen kneeling upon the shore, fixed in stupid gaze over the mangled corses of brothers, husbands, and sons.

La Valette was not present : he durst not trust himself with a sight which must have unmanned him. He withdrew from every eye, to commune singly with that God, whose awful decrees he might not question, but whose graciousness not only permits, but invites us to implore the removal of his judgments when they weigh upon us beyond our strength.

Rodolphe's phrenzied eyes now ran

over the whole surface of the port, in search of those precious relics, which it would be joy to rescue from indignity, and see committed with holy rites to the earth.

Alas, what is our joy? what is our grief? and how limited is our capacity of either, when we can thus admit an emotion of delight from the very circumstance which makes our losses more manifest! Alas, what is our grief, when time, yes time only, can wear away the acuteness of a sorrow as justly due to the memory of its object after years have passed by, as when it was first ravished from us?

Does not every thing show us the finite faculties of man? and should we not thirst, therefore, for that higher state of being, in which a boundless capacity of happiness shall be given him amid its boundless ocean?

The tide continued to wash in many a corse, but no wave came freighted

with that of Giovanni. Hope might have kindled at this, had not several of these corsès been so mangled in the assault, and so wantonly mutilated since, that all traces of humanity were effaced from them. From the sight of these, Rodolphe turned at first, with a convulsive shudder; then returned to assist in drawing them from the water, lest he should unconsciously leave his master's body unhonoured.

“Whose remains do you seek?” asked a knight, who had been long standing pale and dejected near him, fixed in dismal contemplation.

“My master's — the Chevalier Cigala,” returned the Cahet, scarcely able to utter that name.

“I too have sought it,” replied his questioner, who was no other than Felix di Toledo, “but in vain.”

He sighed heavily as he spoke; and, plunging again into his own dark thoughts, took the road to the town.

Not very long after, he entered the infirmary where Cesario lay in the midst of wounded associates ; and, advancing to his pallet, with Donna Camilla in his hand, he said with a faint smile, “ I bring you a nurse, Adimari : she will medicine both your mind and body, for she will mourn with you. I have other work to do.”

The glance of his kindled eye, and the nobly stern expression which at once banished the habitual sweetness of his countenance, were not to be mistaken : they were indicative of his determination to rush into the most desperate scenes, to satisfy his irritated honour, and appease the *manes* of all those whom his father’s political obedience had delivered up to destruction.

The feeble smile which accompanied his first address, was the last Cesario saw upon Toledo’s lips through many a fateful day after the present ; for his heart was stricken ; and not even Camilla could



charm him into the oblivion of what he believed a family-disgrace.

That amiable young creature now approached Cesario, and, mixing her assurance of skill in contusions, with her concern that he should require its exercise, she insinuated by degrees some hope that Giovanni might yet live.

Rodolphe joined them: his haggard visage told the tale which his lips refused to utter. Cesario saw enough in that dreadful look to convince him that none but Camilla entertained the hope he wished to catch at. A deep sigh from Toledo, and a tremulous motion of Rodolphe's head, answered him when he gasped out an enquiry respecting the remains of his friend.

“ Surely that is ground for hope, not for despair!” said the tender Camilla, hastening to catch his sinking head, as it fell back upon his pillow, in complete abandonment to misery. “ Oh! hope, till you are convinced of what you fear!

Assuredly Heaven would never abandon such a matchless person, as I am told your friend was, to such ruthless enemies."

The persuasive tones of her voice had magic in them, for Rodolphe precipitated himself at her feet, where, fastening his lips upon her robe, he lay, inarticulately repeating some broken sentences of gratitude and blest credulity of the hope she painted.

Cesario, meanwhile, more respectfully bowed his head upon her supporting hand, in silent, hopeless thankfulness. He knew Giovanni's principles, and he felt convinced that his soul must have quitted its frail tenement, the first or the last in the breach of St. Elmo.

Toledo cast an approving glance upon his lovely wife, and pressing the hand of Cesario, commended him to her care, while he hurried to attend the council just summoned.

This solemn assembly was preceded

by the more solemn interment of those brave remains which had been rescued from the waters.

The long array of biers was followed by a train of knights in mourning habits, with black tapers in their hands; their pale countenances, at once expressive of sorrow and of resolution to imitate those they mourned.

The suffering inhabitants of Il Borgo thinly lined the streets through which they passed; silently regarding that vast funeral, and listening with suspended breaths to the heavy tread of so many feet, and the deep toll of a single bell.

The bodies were laid in the ground with all the honours of war; and all the ceremonies of religion by the bishop of Malta: but their funeral oration was delivered by La Valette himself.

When the stated service was over, he rose up in the midst of the crowd, and, mastering that transport of grief and indignation which nearly hurried him

out of himself, he pronounced the panegyric of the slain. Then looking round upon the assembly, his eyes sparkling with generous fire, he called on them not to lament, but to emulate those who had fallen so gloriously.

He protested that, for his part, he rather envied than pitied the meanest soldier who had fallen on the walls of St. Elmo; for his measure of glory was filled up; he had departed in the brightness of his fame: while those who remained had yet to war against the infirmities of human nature; to watch and pray, lest they should fall away from their former selves.

He bade his hearers remember that the garrison of St. Elmo had not been conquered by the superior valour or skill of the besiegers, but by their numbers: and that now, that superiority was fast diminishing. The infidels had lost above three thousand men in that single siege; Dragut too, the formidable Dragut, had

just expired in consequence of a wound received in the trenches; a mortal and contagious distemper was in their camp; and their provisions were nearly exhausted.

Thus, if each garrison resolved to emulate the noble example of St. Elmo, and perish rather than capitulate, Malta must finally conquer; for the stormy season would arrive long before the reduction of a second fort so defended; and the infidels, no longer able to receive any but precarious supplies by sea, must at last consume away from disease and famine.

La Valette no longer found it necessary to animate the courage of his people by the hope of foreign succours. A higher state of feeling now prevailed throughout Malta; even the commonest peasant, catching the heroic contagion, thought only of dying for the general good.

Every man, in short, was so assured

that their cause must finally triumph, and that posterity would immortalise its martyrs, that he cared less for living to share, than dying to secure it.

La Valette's penetrating eye discerned this universal exaltation; and glancing for a moment with a softened heart on the bent and varying countenance of Felix di Toledo, he went on, forbearing to mention those succours which were once the main spring of his eloquence.

The appearance of a Greek slave bearing a flag of truce from the Basha, interrupted the answer from the knights. The man's errand was quickly told: he came to summon the whole Order to surrender, offering them specious terms, couched in insulting language.

La Valette, who had seated himself on his entrance, now started up. "Lead him away!" he cried. He then returned calmly to his duties; while Toledo, seizing the astonished messenger, hurried him from the hall.

He led him in silence through the fortified lines of the town; but as he paused with him on the counterscarp, he pointed sternly to the deep ditch below. "See there," he said, "the only spot of ground we can afford your master."

Toledo released the arm he had grasped; and did so with so forceful an action, that the slave staggered and fell. The bitter smile on the brave Spaniard's face was instantly displaced by sudden light; he hailed the omen; and, waiting a moment to see the man joined by the guard that was appointed to conduct him from the lines, he turned back into the town.

## CHAPTER V.

ON the return of his messenger, with a description of the bold conduct of the knights, and the imposing appearance of their defences, Mustapha saw that none but the most vigorous measures could prevent his suffering the disgrace and mortification of final defeat. Aware of those circumstances in his own situation, which inspired La Valette with confidence, he resolved to lose no time in rendering it impossible even for the Sicilian fleet, should it arrive after all, to relieve the garrisons of St. Angelo and St. Michael.

In pursuance of this determination, he proceeded to invest the Christians on the land side, by removing his army from Mount Sceberras to the heights behind



the Isle de la Sangle, and the peninsula on which stood Il Borgo and St. Angelo.

In doing this, he pursued the same plan which had already been so successful with St. Elmo, that of enclosing it in a semicircle of batteries.

The command of Mount Sceberras gave him the advantage of battering the fortresses in front, while the possession of the heights overlooking them, enabled him to plunge the fire of his artillery direct into the towns.

Happily for the besieged, both in Il Borgo and St. Michael, the effect of these formidable preparations was in some degree counterbalanced by the arrival of the troops under Cardona.

The generous spirit of his officers and men was not to be controlled ; and having by a mixture of violence and stratagem induced him to sail back to Malta, and put them on shore, they had suc-

ceeded in making their way under cover of night to the town.

With this unexpected reinforcement, the Grand Master proceeded to strengthen his garrisons, and prepare for the threatened storm.

While the Christians and infidels were thus employed, the sick and wounded amongst the former were slowly recovering.

The Maltese women and the Nuns Hospitallers devoted themselves to the care of those brave men who had bled for their preservation. Their watchful tenderness was more serviceable than the skill of the surgeons; and perhaps their pious consolations, when mixed with the sweet sounds of gratitude, went more surely to the hearts of those they succoured, than all the ceremonies of their common faith.

Donna Camilla was distinguished even here. Perhaps her frame was less strong than others, her nerves less firm, her

countenance less manageable ; but she atoned for these defects of constitution by that extreme sensibility to the sufferings she witnessed, which inspires the possessor of it with a variety of expedients for mitigating pain and infusing fortitude.

Kind and succouring to all, she was especially so to Cesario. His character interested her, his situation called for her liveliest sympathy ; and his evident appreciation of her husband's excellence warmed her regard for him into sister-like affection.

She had persuaded him to remove from the hospital to her husband's quarters in Il Borgo ; and it was there, that she and Toledo endeavoured to medicine his sick soul with all that woman's softness and man's firmness can render grateful or useful.

But what was that medicine ? what discourse could they find to interest the

bereaved Cesario? what object could they offer him in the desolate future!

Nothing, indeed, in this world. When Camilla found him inaccessible to the amiably wild hope she at first attempted to infuse, she ceased to urge it; and dwelt only on the character and fame of him they mourned.

Again and again she drew him into details of Giovanni's military actions; and, as she commented on the hero's ardent desire for the preservation of the Order, she insensibly inflamed Cesario's zeal for the same great object. Thus she taught him to seek consolation for a friend's loss, in sympathy with that friend's strongest desire; and thus, by kindling another strong and laudable passion in Cesario's soul, she gave him a motive to endure what else had crushed him unresistingly: then placing his goal in that heaven to which Giovanni was gone, she prepared him to seek it by a race of glory on earth.

With Camilla, therefore, Cesario talked of his friend's finer shades of character, and to her related all the vicissitudes of their friendship ; with Toledo he expatiated on those sublime features of magnanimity and self-denial which a soldier only can properly estimate ; with Rodolphe he conversed upon those minutiae of Giovanni's domestic hours, which perpetually delight and surprise, or afflict and mortify those who scrutinise thus closely the private life of one removed by death.

Every day Rodolphe had something hitherto untold to relate ; some action or some word unimportant to all others, but most precious to Cesario ; something which exalted Giovanni still higher in his friend's esteem, and rivetted his heart by some additional testimony of Giovanni's all-forgiving affection.

These, added to the never-wearying recital of Giovanni's last message, were the secret treasures of Cesario ; to them he

retired from the society of Toledo and Camilla, when his over-tasked heart could no longer bear the sight of their mutual happiness.

Let it not be imagined that Cesario turned from such happiness, because every thing like it was denied to him. Far different was his reason! He trembled at the exquisiteness of their felicity; and he looked with dismal forebodings to that bloody cloud which was gathering over them all.

Sometimes as they sat together, during the short period of rest from military duties, he would look at the interesting figure of Donna Camilla, and as he contemplated its extreme delicacy, and the sensitive variation of her countenance, he would say to himself, "Alas, what will become of her, if Toledo——" he never finished the sentence.

Never had Cesario seen or imagined a female heart so devoted; and the sight was equally novel as lovely to him.

In the midst of personal danger, and with the prospect of greater trials, Camilla seemed to think, that where her husband was, there was safety, there was joy !

The countenance which was dim, and pale, and abstracted, when he was not present, lighted up into immediate beauty the instant he appeared : through the crystal clearness of a complexion, which only her vivid sensibility coloured, her whole soul was visible ; and her husband,

“ Seen, heard, and felt, possessing every pulse,” became from that instant the only object her eyes voluntarily rested on.

The manly tenderness of Toledo was not so irrepressibly elastic : he could listen in her presence, with a calm air, to the indifferent conversation of another, and give the most earnest attention of mind and eyes to a discourse upon the great interests of society ; but whenever he turned those eyes upon his wife, an

eloquent look promised a recompense for himself and her in their hours of unrestrained, unwitnessed confidence. That deeply fond look said as much perhaps, as all the illuminations of Camilla's kindling countenance.

In short, the heart of each, was equally true, tender, and happy ; but even the heart has a different sex ; and Camilla's had not room for all those great objects which assisted in filling that of her husband.

It was impossible for Cesario to avoid the recurrence of one image, as he contemplated the conjugal happiness of Toledo and the character of his wife — it was that of the woman he wished to forget.

Happily, her image came no longer in the seducing dress of love and imagination ; he saw her now, as she was in fact, a thing to despise, and blush at, for having squandered his soul on, — nay, as



the cause of all his faults and all his misery, for had she not lost him Giovanni?

“Would I could blot out that shameful period from my life!” he would exclaim to himself, his cheeks burning, even though alone, at that humiliating recollection; “I loved her to distraction; and for her sake flung from me the treasure of my soul. I lose *her*, and her image passes away like a shadow — I lose *him*, and the world is a desert! Mighty God! how ill do we read even our own hearts!”

Then would Cesario plunge into an abyss of reflections on the mystery of human passions, and the frailty of human affections, till reason herself could no longer struggle against misanthropy.

But Toledo's fraternal look, or Camilla's tender voice, would at any time draw him back again to friendship with his kind; and then his heart would flow out in a fuller stream of confidence for this temporary check.

There was one circumstance which

severely pained Cesario: since the arrival of Donna Camilla, he observed that Toledo was less gay than before. Two reasons might be given for this change: when separated from the object of his tenderness, by what he deemed necessity, Toledo had not allowed himself any indulgence of regret; thus he was gay then, only because had he been serious, he must have been sad.

In addition to this, the gratifying expectation of seeing Malta relieved by his father, was quite extinguished: and a sense of disgrace substituted in its place. To none of his private remonstrances had the Viceroy been able to pay more attention than to the public applications of La Valette.

Burning to balance, if possible, his father's failure by greater zeal on his part, Toledo now courted situations of the extremest peril; and if a thought arose of the fate too likely to follow this temerity, he banished it, in the fond hope

that Heaven would spare his life for the sake of Camilla.

A Greek deserter from the camp of the infidels had brought intelligence that they meant to attack the peninsula De la Sangle by land and water. Finding it impossible to bring their armed boats against it, under the guns of St. Angelo, (which they must pass, if they attempted to enter the great port from the main sea,) they had projected the astonishing measure, of drawing them from the lesser port actually across Mount Sceberras, and so launching them again directly in front of that point of the peninsula called the Spur of St. Michael.

The Isle de la Sangle, therefore, became the post of danger, and for that station Felix di Toledo solicited.

The surprise with which La Valette heard this bold project of the enemy, was not however coupled with incredulity: he had not forgotten a similar measure, by which the gallies of Dragut had es-

caped from a port blockaded by Andrea Doria; and he therefore set himself immediately to provide against its execution.

In this view, he raised batteries and planted cannon on every part of the peninsula where a descent of troops was practicable; while, to check their approach to the town of St. Michael, which lay on the side opposite Mount Conradin, he formed a huge staccado of piles, driven into the sea, with chains, masts, and sail-yards strongly fastened together; and carrying it from the foot of Conradin to the point of the peninsula, thus barred all entrance to the narrow anchorage beyond.

The post of the gallies, already chained in from the same point to the foot of St. Angelo, he strengthened with different staccadoes of the same materials: and though by reason of the continued fire from the Turkish batteries on the adjacent heights, his men could not carry

on their work by day, at night they laboured so vigorously, that these new defences appeared like so many exhalations to the infidels, who guessed not how they could have been completed in so short a period.

Still anxious to stay the dreadful effusion of blood, which must have been the consequence of his protracted and determined resistance, La Valette deemed it his duty to try again the forlorn hope of an application to Sicily.

Another brave spirit was found as a substitute for the exhausted Cesario, in the person of Marco Doria, who had learned that his father was still in the port of Messina ; and he prayed permission that he might go thither to animate his exertions, if necessary, for the relief of the Order.

His request was complied with. Marco went, and returned : he returned hoping, and deceived.

Doria had no sooner listened to his

son's representation of the state of Malta, and heard the death of him whose later days held out the hope of atonement for the past, than, transported with grief and generous indignation, he ran to the Viceroy, offering to transport as many troops to Malta as his gallies could convey; engaging, by the strength and ability of his rowers, to carry them all safely into the great port before the heavy-minded Turks could have weighed up their anchors. "Let me," he said, "but land your soldiers, and my sailors, (which I'll answer for with my head,) and I care not what becomes of the mere hulks of my gallies. My fortune shall answer for them to the Republic — nay, my life, if she will have it then."

The Viceroy, more cruelly bound than ever, since the fall of St. Elmo, by the narrow policy of his master, dared not avow his painful bondage; he therefore applauded this magnanimous offer, and declaring his intention of immediately

setting sail for Malta, dispatched Marco Doria with that intelligence to the Grand Master.

Meanwhile he persuaded the unsuspecting prince to return to Genoa for permission to abandon his ships, if need were; since, unless he obtained such sanction, Don Garcia said he could not outrage his Royal Master's dignity so far, as to venture upon accepting so bold an offer from an unwarranted subject.

As the Viceroy gave Doria to understand that he meant to sail himself, the instant the soldiers could be embarked, and that Doria's gallies would be employed, when he returned from Genoa, for the transport of other troops now levying, the honest sailor trusted to his truth, and made the voyage, which was to rid the other of his importunities.

Marco reached Malta in all the buoyancy of a sanguine spirit; but La Valette saw deeper into the intentions of Spain; and, dismissing every thought of suc-

cour from that quarter, applied himself with greater energy to defend himself singly.

No sooner did he perceive the views of the infidels upon the Isle de la Sangle, than he hastened to man that peninsula with his best soldiers. Cesario, now restored to a capacity for service, and Toledo animated by a noble sense of disgrace, were amongst these new reinforcements.

Donna Camilla was not to be separated from her husband. She dared all the dangers and terrors of a temporary bridge, thrown across from one peninsula to the other; and, protected by Providence, through the shower of balls under which she was led by her fondly-chiding yet grateful husband, she reached her destination in safety.

Scarcely were they thus transported from Il Borgo to the town of St. Michael, when the two warriors were called into action. The infidels, they were told,



had desperately attempted to force the staccado; at least to break it, sufficiently for their boats to pass through.

At this moment, some were seen swimming towards it with their axes stuck in their girdles; while others, already upon it, were eagerly trying to cut it away with their hatchets.

The firing from the Christian batteries gave little interruption to this bold enterprise; for proceeding from too great a height, it scarcely took effect.

Consternation had seized the few soldiers guarding the shore; but no sooner did Cesario and Toledo reach it, than by the same impulse each tore off his clothes, and calling on those who followed, to imitate their example, they took their swords in their teeth, and, plunging into the water, swam to the staccado.

There wanted but such an example: numbers joined them almost instantly, encouraged by Di Monte, who commanded at that station.

The contest on the staccado was short and fierce; each Turk disputed the possession of this important work with all the fury of baffled confidence and frustrated ambition. The Christians thought not of themselves; nobler and stronger feelings inflamed them; they fought for the preservation of each other, and the continuance of their Order.

Rodolphe alone was stimulated by a thirst for vengeance: as he grasped the throat of each opponent on the pile, and at every deadly thrust of his dagger, he shrilly pronounced the name of his master.

The pulsation of Cesario's heart stopped every time that name was uttered; yet, only to beat again with greater force of resolution. That name was his watchword to conquest: happily, individual revenge had no power over his Christian principle.

Toledo boasted the honour of hurling

the last infidel into the sea ; after which, each brave Maltese swam back to land, amid the shouts and applauses of his associates.

## CHAPTER VI.

**EVEN** after this affair, more than one unsuccessful attempt to destroy the staccado was made by the enemy. In vain they varied their modes, and called in the aid of their ships and levers; the Christians triumphed over all their stratagems. Mustapha at length desisted; and believing that success must depend upon the actual weight of his whole force being directed upon each smaller object separately, he determined to attack the Isle de la Sangle alone, with all his troops.

A reinforcement of six thousand men, under Hassan of Algiers, had just reached him; and as Hassan, not yet acquainted with the temper of the knights' swords, de-

rided their romantic chivalry, Mustapha yielded to his impetuous desire of attacking them without delay.

While the infidels, therefore, were preparing for a grand assault, by battering the devoted peninsula from all their old and new batteries; and the Christians were as actively employed in strengthening their fortifications, and exercising themselves in every species of hazardous service; Cesario beheld with a tranquil eye, for himself, the approaching struggle. He hoped to fall, but to fall amidst victory: yet, even while looking to that hour with the distempered impatience of a world-sick heart, he breathed a prayer for the preservation of Toledo.

It was impossible for a heart like Cesario's to shut out all interest in objects which, in his happier days, would have warmed him with affection; and now he contemplated Toledo and Camilla with a sad tenderness, prophetic of ill; which, if it deepened his own melancholy, did

not leave existence quite sterile of every sweet and sympathising emotion.

There was something inexpressibly interesting to him in that union of softness and heroism which he hourly remarked in Camilla : though her feelings were torn by apprehension for her husband, whenever he was at his post, or exposing himself in some hastily conceived enterprise, she never gave them utterance to himself : she never attempted to melt him into that momentary weakness, of which he might afterwards have repented. It was not that his glory was dearer to her than her own peace, but his self-esteem was. If there were an action which her Felix's calm reason and principles would have condemned himself in the slightest degree, for yielding to, even though that action might spare her days of agony, she would have shrunk from urging it.

His principles were fate to her : and when her trembling hands armed him for

the fight, and her labouring heart almost throbbed to bursting, she sought not to detain him ; breathing only blessings and giving only farewell embraces, where one more selfish (there could not be one more fond) would have made her words supplications, and her arms bonds.

Cesario often lulled the remembrance of his own irreparable losses of father and of friend, in the endeavour to soothe those fears which Camilla rarely expressed to any but him ; and loving her with the disinterested affection of a brother, he felt that if Toledo were to fall, he could wish then to live, only to protect her, and watch over their expected babe.

With these feelings strongly excited, one night, after a day spent in harassing sallies from different outposts, he saw with a mixture of satisfaction and uneasiness, on visiting the extreme end of the peninsula, that the enemy were evidently preparing for a sudden and fierce assault.

His honour was pledged to Toledo, to

give him the intelligence of every expected action, and, hastening back for that purpose, he repaired to the town.

As he slowly entered the apartment which contained his friends, he could not help pausing a moment to contemplate the picture they formed.

The light of a lamp fell directly upon the spot where they were placed.

Camilla was sitting on a low cushion, supporting her husband's head on her lap, while he lay asleep. As she bent over him, his manly figure, half despoiled of its martial trappings, formed a picturesque contrast with the delicate grace and light drapery of hers.

The contrast was yet greater between her fair face, all awake with fond and varying expression, and his bronzed features, fixed in tranquil sleep. Yet was there so soft and sweet a smile upon the lips of Toledo, while he slept, that, like moonlight on the water, it seemed but



the reflection of the smile of her that hung over him.

At the sound of Cesario's step, she started, and a vivid blush shot into her cheek : she bashfully moved her knee a little, as if to shake the sleeper off, yet so gently, that she did not rouse him.

“ He was so tired ! ” she said, with an air of embarrassment and apology ; and she continued to look down, ashamed of her unwillingness to sacrifice her husband's rest to her sense of propriety.

Neither this beautiful shame, nor the tenderness which triumphed over it, were lost upon Cesario : he advanced with an air of respect, and, careful not to rouse her fears by any abruptness, instead of waking Toledo by the usual method, he took up her lute as if by chance, and making some courteous reply to her, passed his hand somewhat strongly over the strings.

Toledo waked at the sound : as he opened his eyes, he saw Cesario sitting in

seeming composure near him. Used to see him thus domesticated with them, and quite wearied with past exertion, Toledo just stretched out his hand to him, without otherwise altering his position, bidding his wife "sing him that air again."

At his desire, Camilla took the lute, and, bending over it, sang with all the heart's pathos, the following song: —

#### SONG.

THE mellow'd strain of distant horn,  
O'er some wide-spreading water borne  
At set of sun, to wanderer lone,  
Is like his voice of silver tone!  
And heard amid the twilight pale,  
When warbling sweet, the nightingale  
Pours her fond soul to woods alone,  
'Tis like his voice of silver tone!

The darkly-rich, empurpled hue  
Of violet beds when steep'd in dew,  
And moon-light on their surface lies,  
Is like his soft and lovely eyes!  
And when Eve's star, with humid light,  
Just trembles on the verge of night,  
That tender beam, those shaded skies,  
Are like his soft and lovely eyes!

The fond eyes which opened again to raise themselves to Camilla's face, and the tender, whispering accent which thanked her, were faithfully described in the words of her song: Cesario felt their resemblance, and he could not stifle the involuntary sigh which escaped him.

At that sound, for his sigh was fraught with his foreboding and pitying heart, Toledo turned on him an investigating glance, and reading his countenance started up: — “I see we are not to rest to night!” he cried; “where is the point threatened? Camilla, sweetest, fetch me my lighter baldrick.”

His wife tremulously obeyed; and in the rapid moment between her disappearance and return, Toledo enquired, and Cesario hastily named, the Spur of St. Michael.

Toledo took the baldrick from his wife with a bright look of ardour; and while he eagerly armed himself, bade her be of good cheer, for the faster the in-

fidels repeated their attacks, the sooner would the Christians get to the end of their work.

“ And where is the assault now ? ” asked Camilla, striving to diffuse a serene expression over her suddenly blanched and quivering features. “ At the Spur, dearest ! ” replied her husband ; “ they will not come on till day-break ; but I must be there directly, or perhaps—— ”

Camilla released the arm which she had instinctively seized in both her trembling hands ; and, looking on him through blinding tears, with an expression of love and submission, faltered out, “ O go — go, my Felix ! I know it is right — and I can pray for you ! ”

Toledo caught her to his breast without speaking : again and again he relaxed that fond grasp, and as often clasped her to him anew. His heart, his eyes, his voice, all overflowed with tenderness.

At length in a gayer tone, exclaiming against his own folly, he reminded her

and himself how often he had thus gone, and returned from similar contests ; then bestowing on her another embrace, coupled with a fervent benediction, he tore himself away.

Camilla, all pale and trembling and tearless now, caught Cesario's hand as he was passing her, whispering, " Will it be a very dangerous service to-night ? "

" We can but guess at it," replied Cesario hastily ; " but I swear to you, the sword that reaches Toledo shall make its way through this body : " he kissed her hand as he spoke, looked on her, and disappeared.

The expectations of the Christians were not deceived : when day dawned, a strange and threatening sight presented itself.

A numerous fleet of boats, after having been actually brought across the opposite mountain, were seen covering the water of the great port, advancing to the staccado and the Spur, amidst the clash of

warlike instruments and the barbarous hymns of priests and dervises.

Meanwhile Hassan, with the flower of his new troops, was pouring down like a torrent, on the land side, through all those avenues opened by the continued cannonading of preceding days.

The whole peninsula was thus placed between two fires ; and the destruction of every thing upon it seemed inevitable.

The besieged, however, undismayed by common calculations, met them at every point, opposing a few invincible spirits to hosts of mere animal bravery. Their courage seemed to grow with their danger. They threw themselves upon the enemy on the staccado, in the very sea, upon the ramparts of the town, and the bastions of St. Michael, with a boldness which amazed and paralised their adversaries.

When at last, overpowered with the increasing heat of a burning sun, they were driven for a moment, by mere weight of numbers, from their lines, they

returned, new-strung with noble shame ; and, rushing upon the infidels, hurled them headlong from the walls.

How often that day was the same standard wrested by Turk from Christian, and from Christian again by Turk, each time seised by the proud conqueror, in the vain belief of secure possession ! Many were the piles of rival dead that fell at once under each other's fire, marking with their horrid mounds the hottest and deadliest points of contest !

Cesario and Toledo fought their way to the extremest point of the peninsula, where the Algerine troops had just effected a landing under one continued thunder of cannon, the smoke of which favoured their descent.

Candelissa, an Italian renegade, who commanded them, with desperate determination to conquer or die ordered back his boats, that retreat might thus be rendered impossible, and his troops find their

only path to their own camp through the breasts of the enemy.

This daring experiment succeeded: led on by their savage chief, the Algerines rushed forward to the intrenchment with their scaling ladders, and, clapping them against the wall, attempted to mount.

The Christians, crowding to the place threatened, showered death in every form upon them below: the enemy fell in masses under their pikes and swords. But still new battalions succeeded; and still the fight was renewed with redoubled animosity.

In a few instants the standards of Mahomet were seen flying on the intrenchment; but, burning with pious indignation, that remnant of gallant Christians returned to the charge, and, tearing down these hated trophies, drove the enemy from the wall.

In the confusion of that repulse, Ce-



sario and Toledo, who had hitherto fought side by side, were separated. Cesario rushed after a Turkish officer who was carrying off the only standard still in the enemy's hands ; and Toledo followed the flying steps of Candelissa himself.

That coward renegade was the first to turn his back, and to cast himself headlong from the wall : Toledo sprang after him. He averted his eyes from the horrible pool of blood into which he leaped ; and, dashing through it, pursued the fleeter dastard to the shore.

Unconscious of their commander's disgrace, meanwhile a band of stouter Algerines contested with backward step the victory with the knights.

So determined was their resistance, and so few the numbers of their brave enemy, that perhaps the tide of conquest might have turned again, had not Cesario sallied forth from a casemate with a party of fresh soldiers which La Valette

had dispatched from St. Angelo ; and, rushing unexpectedly upon the infidels, drove them finally into the water.

The enemy was now beaten off from every point round the spur of the peninsula ; but the tremendous cannonading and sulphureous clouds above the town of St. Michael declared that the work of death was still going on there.

Cesario thought instantly of Donna Camilla, who must be then in that scene of horror ; and with a thrill of alarm, he looked round for her husband.

He saw him not, and he hurried in search of him.

Each knight he questioned was ignorant whether the gallant Spaniard had survived the action. Every one had seen him in the hottest of the fight ; and one remembered seeing him pursuing the flying Candelissa.

Rodolphe, too, was missing. Cesario's heart sickened : he paused a moment to recover his palsied powers, and then he

called loudly on the names of his friend and his servant.

Nothing answered him but echoes. He hurried onwards, still repeating at every change of place those agitating names.

After frequent disappointment in various parts of the field, at last his cry was answered by a voice, but not the voice of either. It proceeded from a groupe of soldiers at a distance, proceeding in the direction of the town.

Cesario was in the midst of them with the rapidity of an arrow. What a sight smote him!—the body of Toledo extended on a bier, hastily formed of the pikes and clokes of his soldiers.

A ball had struck that noble heart in the act of following Candelissa, and dismissed his soul, without one pang of conscious death, to the bliss of heaven.

Rodolphe, who had followed Toledo, and saved his remains from outrage, was kneeling by the bier, weeping again the

death of his master, in the fall of one who resembled him in his virtues.

Cesario stood heart-struck over the bier: his grief had no voice, no tears; it was deep, deep and silent.

He thought of the moment in which he had seen that lifeless head reposing on the lap of his wife: he saw again their last embrace; he saw Toledo's last smile. The humid eyes which had fondly hung upon that smile, gathering from it hope and confidence in heaven, would never, never more, light up into joy!

Cesario bowed his spirit before the unsearchable decrees of God. What mortal may question them?—what mortal does not prostrate his rebellious nature with inward humility, when he thus sees the judgments of the *Most High* passing over himself and others?

Having stood long in solemn meditation by the remains of his friend, Cesario stooped down and imprinted a kiss upon the ice-cold brow; that touch dissolved

his heart; and, gushing into tears, he rested his head there till the torrent was exhausted.

When Cesario recovered himself, his first thought was Camilla; and he was hastening to order the bearers of the bier rather to turn back with it into the fort than proceed to the town, where the sudden shock of its appearance might prove fatal to her, when, through the scattered groupes of soldiers bearing off the wounded, he discovered a figure which he could not mistake, running in the direction towards them.

It was Camilla, whom report had early informed of her loss.

She came with the same swiftness with which Cesario had seen her fly to meet her husband on her landing; but O, how different was her countenance! — her scattered hair blown rudely by the wind was the only covering of her head; and her face, stamped with the colours of

death, was filled with the most frightful distraction.

She ran—she flew—she reached the bier, and gazed an instant on the motionless face; then casting one look at Cesario, precipitated herself upon the body of her husband.

Her arms locked that insensible body in a grasp which nothing loosened but the temporary suspension of her own life: as those slackening arms fell powerless down, Cesario caught her sinking form. His heart yet ached with the wild reproach of the look she had cast on him: it seemed to say, “You live, and he is dead!”

Alas, in spite of his voluntary promise, Cesario was not by to shield the rashly brave Toledo; and if he had been so, how could he have interposed between him and the unmarked flight of a bullet?

Motioning for the bier to follow, and overcome with these ideas, Cesario lifted

her in his arms, and, turning back, carried her into the fort.

Some nuns, who were charitably assisting in the hospital there, hastened to receive and succour her. Cesario consigned her to them; and having seen the body of Toledo laid under a pall in the chapel of the fortress, he turned to go away.

The solitary priest who officiated in the place, was preparing to say a mass over it: Cesario turned back and lifted the pall. His eyes rested upon that still and marbled face. The images of his father, of Giovanni, of Toledo himself while in life, of Camilla, of all in short whom he had loved and lost, or might yet lose, pressed upon his thoughts: glory, revenge, duty, every other passion and affection was dead within him at that moment; he stood suspended in spirit, till the increasing thunder of the cannonading round the different posts

beyond the town called him back to action.

He rushed from the chapel : and, passing the chamber of Camilla, saw Rodolphe seated sadly upon the ground before the door.

“ Rodolphe ! ” he cried, “ you love this unhappy lady—stay here—I must go, and I would not leave her without one familiar face to look on.”

He did not wait for reply ; but hastening to the remote post where the Basha and Hassan were making another attack, he plunged into the thick of the combatants.



## CHAPTER VII.

FROM this point, and nearly every other, the enemy were beaten back, after several days and nights of continued fighting: neither party intermitted their fury but when exhausted nature could not be urged further.

The shores of the peninsula and the waters of the port were hideously covered with dead, amongst which might be counted the bravest and the noblest of the Order. As their numbers were hourly decreasing, and the fortifications of St. Michael nearly demolished, nothing but the miraculous appearance of the Sicilian succours could, it was thought, preserve them.

The ruthless Mustapha, instead of be-

holding those heroic men with any sentiment of admiration, found their valour only inflame his rancour; and once more changing his measures, he determined to divide his forces, and attack both the peninsulas of St. Michael and St. Angelo at the same time.

Each day, after this resolution, new batteries arose, and swept down every thing in their line of fire. At the same moment the Turks assaulted all the posts of the Christians, thus distracting their attention, and dividing their shrunk forces.

Women and children were now obliged to lend their feeble aid; and as the infidels scaled the walls of a work, amid showers of stones and boiling pitch, they were amazed to find themselves falling under the hands of such weak adversaries.

Night and day this tremendous struggle continued: the rock resounded with groans, and flowed with fire; so that

to those who wandered over the seas, it must have appeared like some supernatural beacon; or rather like the gulf of Tartarus yawning to receive them.

Cesario no longer cheered by the society of Toledo, and weary with so many sights of horror, began to repine at his own safety: in vain he cast himself into the hottest parts of every action; no ball had its commission for him.

Life was now indeed completely desolate to him: he had been summoned back by the Grand Master, to his original station, the lines of Il Borgo; and was thus cut off from all information of Donna Camilla.

But soon, alas, Rodolphe rejoined him from the isle De la Sangle, after having seen the widowed Camilla laid in the same grave with her husband.

Nearly in a state of insensibility she had given birth to a dead child, a few hours after Cesario left her; and had

herself expired, ere she could know this second affliction.

“And this is the world I once coveted so !” exclaimed Rodolphe, as resting awhile from their duty, he talked over the various losses which Cesario and himself had sustained.

“’Tis a world of trial, Rodolphe,” replied Cesario. “I once thought it a world of happiness, and I was told otherwise by our *Divine Teacher*—now, my soul weeps that mistake in blood !—But let us rouse ourselves—let us remember that all we mourn, yet exist, yet behold us—yet tenderly regard us :—let us make ourselves worthy of reunion with them.”

“O, that I had never left my cave !” was Rodolphe’s answer, as, smiting his breast, he turned a wistful and miserable look towards France.

At that moment, the explosion of a mine at a distance terminated their discourse. That explosion had blown down part of the wall at the bastion of Castille,

and the enemy were already mounting the breach.

Cesario and Rodolphe ran to join the defenders. They saw the Turkish colours planted at the foot of the parapet; and heard the remoter roar of cannon which convinced them that an assault was making at that very moment upon the distant castle of St. Michael.

Now seemed the crisis of both important posts. Cesario started forwards, and beheld the Grand Master himself, without helm or cuirrass, or any other defence than the sword he had snatched up in haste, rushing upon the enemy, regardless of those knights who were on their knees, imploring him to remember that the existence of Malta depended upon his life.

“What! when ye are all so worthy to command!” exclaimed La Valette, with animation. “Give me way—I or those standards fall this moment.”

At these words, Cesario boldly pushed

him back ; and starting forward with a few companions, as nobly resolved to conquer or perish, each seized a flaming standard, (for they were blazing with the combustibles thrown on them from above,) and hurrying back, laid their trophies at the Grand Master's feet.

This daring act inspired general emulation : the Christians rushed upon the foe with preternatural power, sweeping them before them like a flood.

But again and again the human tide rolled back ; and one wide scene of carnage presented itself.

The knights, inspired by the presence of their Grand Master, were elevated beyond themselves : they heard the valiant resistance at the isle De la Sangle, and fearing to be outdone in bravery by the garrison there, not one would quit the action, even though covered with wounds, till death had released, or victory rewarded him.

Such firmness was sure of conquest.

The enemy at length sounded a retreat, leaving some of their most distinguished officers, and nearly all the troops they had brought to the assault, dead or dying, before the disputed bastion.

The Christians' loss was less considerable; but La Valette himself was wounded; and the destruction on the isle De la Sangle, (though there, too, the enemy had been foiled,) was fearfully great.

Once more the Grand Master determined to call upon the viceroy of Sicily; and hoping that his heart would either be softened into pity for others by his own private loss, or inflamed (though culpably) to revenge, he commissioned Cesario to sail for Sicily with the sad news of Don Felix's fall, and a last demand for succour.

A tempestuous wind which lasted during the few days in which the breathless enemy remained quiet, prevented Cesario from attempting the passage. His own life he set not "at a pin's fee," but on

his reaching Messina in safety, hung the lives of all the inhabitants and defenders of Malta.

On the fourth evening, the wind fell, and immediately seizing this opportunity, Cesario was hastening through the town, when, by one lingering gleam of light which yet contended with evening, he saw an arrow drop at his feet. It had evidently been shot from the Turkish camp, on the heights above; and he passed it as a danger gone by, and uncared for.

But Rodolphe, observing something thrust into a part of the shaft, stooped, and picked it up.

He drew forth a narrow slip of Taffeta from the arrow, and gave it to Cesario. The latter took it eagerly, and went with it to a porch illuminated by a lamp.

When he cast his eye on the silk, he uttered a piercing cry: there was only the word "Thursday" written there, but the characters were the firm and peculiar



ones of that hand, which till now, he had believed ceased from all its functions.

Pressing these precious characters to his lips, Cesario dropt upon his knees, all his faculties suspended in one seizure of awe and joy.

Rodolphe wistfully looked at him, without daring to enquire what all this meant: "He lives!" cried Cesario, again pressing the blessed testimony to his heart, and to his lips, and gushing into tears, "Your master lives!"

Rodolphe fell to the ground as if struck by lightning.

The mixed transport of doubt and hope, of incredulity and rapture, which followed the poor fellow's recovery of sense, perhaps enabled Cesario to bear his own overwhelming happiness. He repeated his conviction of Giovanni's existence, both from the characters of this writing, and the information it was intended to convey; and, having seen the delirious joy of Rodolphé, at last melt

into tears and thanksgivings, he left him in the charge of a sentinel, while he flew back to the Grand Master with the arrow and its important freight.

La Valette's feelings were seen in the bright suffusion of a cheek, long since rendered pale by many cares and many griefs.

“ Giovanni Cigala lives !” was his exclamation after a short and solemn pause of inward devotion: “ we will take his preservation as a blessed omen for ourselves. A miracle has been worked for him — may not the same gracious Providence work one for us ?”

The intelligence meant to be conveyed by Giovanni, could not be mistaken. Thursday was evidently the day fixed on, for some peculiarly fierce attack from the enemy ; and La Valette assured Cesario, that thus warned, he would prepare to meet it with the utmost power of his mind and means.

Cesario's heart was once again on earth and in Malta; but with the great object upon which he was going, Giovanni's deliverance was bound up; and that circumstance animated him to proceed.

Earnestly beseeching the Grand Master to question whatever prisoners might now fall into his hands, upon the situation of that beloved friend, he rejoined the joyfully distracted Rodolphe; and committing themselves to the mercy of the winds and waves, happily gained the open sea, unsuspected and unseen.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**DURING** their short voyage, one great joy obliterated, for awhile, the very remembrance of past sorrow. Cesario and Rodolphe talked and thought only of Giovanni. When compared with his death, his captivity seemed dust in the balance; and hoping for miracle upon miracle, they abandoned themselves to an intoxication of hope, nearly amounting to the convictions of insanity.

These balmy feelings were not, alas! of long continuance. When Cesario had to tell the mournful tale of Toledo and Camilla to the heart-struck Viceroy, their happiness so exquisite, yet doomed to destruction, warned him not to reckon upon any promised blessing; and when

he heard the Viceroy, amid his lamentations and threatenings, confess his inability to move before the arrival of further instructions from his court, he sunk at once into despair.

This weakness was brief; he roused himself anew, and discovering that Don Garcia's secret wishes were, in fact, to succour the cause for which his son had fallen, he set about rousing that spirit of determination in the troops, which might afford their leader a plausible pretext for yielding to his own desire.

This plan succeeded. Inflamed by the eloquence of Cesario, alternately melted by the affecting picture which he drew of the sufferings of the besieged, or stimulated by their heroism, the soldiers burst the palace-gates, calling on the Viceroy to lead them to the relief of those devoted heroes.

They who had served under Felix di Toledo, invoked his father, by that affecting name, to aid their vengeance: while

those who had fought under Don Garcia's banners, on the shores of Africa, called on him to remember those scenes of his former fame, nor leave others to reap the fresh laurels he might win at Malta!

At length, pressed on every side, by crowds without and friends within; and urged, besides, by his own warlike humour, and parental regrets, Don Garcia named Syracuse as the rendezvous; and set out thither to assume the command.

Each different division, headed by ardent and experienced captains, was composed of veteran soldiers, and volunteers, whose intrepidity made up for their youth and inexperience in war: to these were added several brothers of the Order, gathered together from distant countries.

All were now hurried on board the transports by Cesario's influence; his impatience not allowing one instant's relaxation to the Viceroy.

In this he was ably seconded by the general spirit; so that by the first of

September the whole army was embarked, and the fleet getting under weigh, amid the discharge of cannon and the acclamations of multitudes.

Scarcely could Cesario and Rodolphe restrain the most frantic expressions of joy, when on the fifth night they drew near the channel of Goza, and heard the faint reverberation of the Turkish and Maltese artillery.

There was the goal of all their hopes and fears! A few hours would determine whether those hopes were to end in blessed certainty, or whether those fears were to be dismally realised.

That dreaded Thursday! — How had it passed?

Even as Cesario's eyes were fixed on the gradually-increasing rock, and his heart labouring with those anxious thoughts, the wind changed, and blew so violent a gale, from an adverse point, that in an hour or two the fleet was di-

vided ; one division entirely losing sight of the other, and both dispersed.

After long combatting the fury of the elements, damaged, but not destroyed, the transports and gallies which the Viceroy commanded regained the coast of Sicily, and cast anchor at Passal : — there they were joined by the vanguard of the fleet, under Don Juan Cardona.

Impelled by the impetuosity of his companions, Cardona had persisted, in spite of the elements, in steering for Malta, and had actually landed the troops he carried.

No sooner was this circumstance proclaimed by his appearance with his empty transports, than the soldiers of Don Garcia, still doubting his sincerity, surrounded the council-room, where he was displaying the cruel fetters by which a newly-arrived mandate from Spain had bound him ; and forcing the entrance, proceeded in tumultuous heaps into his presence ; demanding to be re-embarked



immediately, and landed at all risks in Malta ; or threatening, else, to seize the ships, and command themselves.

The sparkling looks, and silence of the officers, whom they called on to strengthen their party by their countenance, convinced Don Garcia that these mutineers would be supported in their brave rebellion ; he therefore made a virtue of necessity ; and rising from the council-board, exclaimed,

“ My friends, I admire your spirit too much to punish your rebellion : — see that you justify this forbearance.”

He then gave orders for the reembarkation of all the troops, and dismissed the assembly, amid their shouts and applauses.

Once more, then, they put to sea : once more they came in sight of Malta. Cesario stood on the deck of the viceroy's vessel, near the viceroy himself, regarding him with a look which deepened in its sternly-threatening expression : as he

drew nearer the object desired, he dreaded only the more being again torn from it.

They were now steering for the western side of the island ; having learned off Goza, that the Turkish fleet, expecting they would attempt to relieve St. Angelo by forcing the entrance of the great port, had drawn up all their fleet there, adding a huge staccado of impenetrable strength across its mouth.

When near the island, the wind had changed unfavorably, and the vessel was necessarily obliged to be tacked several times, to gain the harbour. In making the last stretch off the land, which the master of the vessel, apprehensive of the wind still becoming more contrary, had lengthened to seemingly an unnecessary distance, Cesario took alarm : he fancied this the beginning of a new series of retracting artifices ; and turning on the man with all his suspicions in his aspect, cried out in a terrible voice, " He that utters another word of delay, shall find

this sword in his heart — if I perish the moment afterwards.”

As he spoke he glanced his eyes upon the viceroy with a look which needed no interpreter. “I understand you, young man!” said Don Garcia, haughtily returning his glance with one of less noble fire: “command your countenance; or it will undo you, if you mean to rise in life.” — “Rather may I fall, than rise basely!” was Cesario’s rash and biting answer.

The viceroy’s hand was instantly upon his sword. The flash of the weapon, as he drew it forth, attracted the attention of the other officers; and immediately interposing, they gave the two irascible spirits time to cool.

Even while they closed upon them, the vessel was casting anchor; and some lighter ones were disembarking their crews.

That sight subdued Cesario: he returned his sword into its scabbard, with a crimsoned countenance, as, bowing re-

spectfully to the viceroy, he said, "There is your excellency's triumph," and he pointed to the anchored gallies.

Don Garcia hesitated an instant, then held out his hand to him with an altered countenance: Cesario put the hand to his lips; and calling on Rodolphe, flew to assist in lowering the boat which was to convey them to the land.

Once more on that island, which he loved for Giovanni's sake, and which he believed still contained that precious friend; Cesario felt new life in all his limbs; and as he counted the stout battalions which drew up on the shore, as they disembarked, till they formed one formidable body, he asked himself whether this were not some wild dream of sleep or madness?

The viceroy had now stretched his powers to the utmost: his instructions were to return immediately to Sicily; which, of course, its governor could not in prudence leave for the indeterminate

time to which the siege of Malta might yet be drawn out.

He reviewed the troops, harangued them upon their duties, and their illustrious cause ; reminded the soldiers of his gallant son : and, faithfully promising to dispatch the Prince of Melfi with his gallies and auxiliaries, the moment he returned from the Genoese coast ; he re-embarked amongst the acclamations of his army.

Ere the army commenced its march for *la Citta Notabile*, the centre of the island, its commanders de Sande and della Corna, deemed it expedient to give the Grand Master as early intelligence as possible of their arrival ; and Rodolphe offering himself for the service, if accompanied by a peasant acquainted with the country, to take him by the shortest path to the vicinity of Il Borgo ; he engaged after that to proceed alone, and get through the enemy's lines unperceived, or unsuspected.

His offer was accepted ; for none besides himself and Cesario (whose local knowledge was required for the march of the troops) knew the situation of the Turkish camp ; or the circuitous ways by which it might be skirted.

Cesario briefly commended the zealous Cahet to Heaven ; and charging him with numerous questions about Giovanni, shook hands with, and dismissed him.

The troops had halted ; and were encamped in a strong position, between a fortified monastery, and *la Citte Notabile*, when Rodolphe returned.

The news he brought winged his feet. He related, that when he entered Il Borgo, the standard of St. John was flying from the tower of St. Elmo, and from all the Turkish batteries round : that panic-struck, when they heard of the landing of the Sicilian succours, and magnifying their numbers in proportion to their own fears, the enemy had precipitately withdrawn all their garrisons, spiked their

guns, destroyed their stores, and afraid of being blocked up in the great port and besieged in their turn, had embarked on the instant.

La Valette had then lost no time in seizing the abandoned stations: and happy it was that he did so, for the infidels, on hearing the real force of the new troops; and finding it did not exceed six thousand men; instead of proceeding to sea, had turned back, and seeing it vain to attempt repossessing themselves of the posts they had fled from, were now landed in the bay of St. Paul; determining to seek and give battle to the Christian army.

This was the public news brought by Rodolphe: his private intelligence, though scanty, was yet more precious to the ear for which it was intended.

The Grand Master himself had assured him, that from one of the wounded left by the Turks in their hospital, and since dead, he had heard that Giovanni Cigala

lived, and was a prisoner in their camp : but how saved he knew not, nor why preserved.

Cesario embraced Rodolphe in the transport of joy with which he heard these glad tidings, — he did not blush to yield to his softened and grateful feelings with one who felt the same. — What now should damp those hopes, which the Divine breath itself seemed graciously to kindle ?

When after his effusion of rapture, the apprehensive Cahet expressed a fear lest the infidels should butcher their prisoners in cold blood, out of revenge for their present disappointment ; Cesario chid his want of faith in the mercy of that Providence, whose arm was now evidently stretched out to save ; and by a variety of animating arguments, in favour of the many possibilities of Giovanni's escape, during the present confusion in the enemy's movements ; or, at least of his being preserved unhurt, for the sake of



obtaining their prisoners better terms ; he succeeded in imparting his own confidence.

Impatient for the moment which was to decide the fate of the infidels, and terminate his own anxiety, Cesario attended a summons to immediate council.

He found the officers discussing the two questions of whether it were best to remain in their present strong position, and there await the enemy, or advance and give him battle in the plain ?

Each opinion had its supporters. The prudent and the timid maintained the propriety of resting where they were, behind intrenchments, whence it was scarcely possible they could be dislodged ; and so waiting till the infidels, who came unprovided with provisions, and who must sink under the heat of that open champaign, were obliged to return to their ships.

The rash and the ardent represented,

on the other hand, the disgrace of thus conquering without striking a blow ; they suggested also, that finding them thus planted, the enemy might suddenly fall back either upon Il Borgo or St. Michael ; and, stimulated by despair, carry one or both these places ere the army could march to save them.

What then would be the shame and remorse of all now in the camp ? It is true, their numbers did not exceed six thousand effective men ; and the infidels, even after their losses by war and disease, yet mustered three times that force : but the one army was fresh and resolute ; the other, war-wearied and disheartened.

De Sande, who commanded the army of Naples, was one of those who counselled bold measures : Della Corna, the representative of the Viceroy, urged the certainty of success by less hazardous means.

Cesario, to whom every moment's delay seemed the loss of that critical in-

stant which might restore Giovanni to freedom, started from his seat, and, delivering his opinion for immediate battle, with all that eloquence of speech, and countenance, and gesture, which made him irresistible in whatever cause he chose to plead, won over to his side more than half his adversaries.

No sooner did he perceive the effect he had produced, than, checking his impetuous oratory, he briefly summed up all the arguments he had adduced; then added, — “These are the reasons which weigh with my judgment — you are to pronounce whether they are sound or not: but I will confess, that my heart also is impelled forward, — impelled, not merely by passionate zeal for the preservation of an illustrious Order, but with desire to recover the noblest of warriors, and the dearest of friends: Giovanni Cigala lives, and is prisoner to the infidels.”

All the knights present, had known

Giovanni in former days, and not the meanest soldier but had heard of his fame : they set up a shout of joy at this communication ; and, tumultuously hurrying from the council, declared they would themselves rush upon the enemy, accompanied by their military followers, and cut their way to their captive brother.

“ I opposed your opinions, but I will share your danger ! ” exclaimed Della Corna, mixing with them ; and no other officer attempting to renew the debate, orders were given for the whole army to quit their camp, and march down into the plain.

No sooner were they in motion, than they beheld the close battalions of the Basha advancing slowly towards them. The meridian sun flamed over the gorgeous ranks of the infidels : their numbers and their array were imposing. But though Cesario, as he eyed them, for the first time in his life, breathed a prayer

for his own preservation, he doubted not the success of his brave companions.

Life was now dear to him, because Giovanni was in bondage : and no zeal for his deliverance could be expected to equal that of the friend whose happiness was bound up in his liberation.

If Cesario were to fall, Giovanni's release might not be sure. These were the passing thoughts of a moment ; Cesario turned to Rodolphe by his side, and, casting on him an inspiring look, he said as they rushed into the fight, " Now for the blessed Cross, and your master."

Then began the roar of battle — then flowed the tide of blood. The Turkish officers fought as if that spirit which had deserted half their soldiers, was all infused into their breasts. They alone gave a short and fearful check to the sweeping torrent of the Christians : but overwhelmed at last, they sunk under the weight of the whole Christian force, and were either borne along with their own

flying squadrons, or trampled under foot by the hotly-pursuing foe.

The routed infidels fled to the coast, where they threw themselves into shallops, nay, into the very waves themselves, in the hope of reaching their ships.

But the knights, jumping into the sea after them, regardless of the artillery thundering from the Turkish fleet, turned those crimsoning waves into another sanguinary field.

Many were the struggling wretches who fell under their eager blades!

Mustapha himself narrowly escaped death as he scaled the tall side of a gallion. His safety was the signal for a second flight: the whole fleet slipped their cables; and, crowding sail, were soon far from the scene of their defeat, and the memorials of their disgrace.

As Cesario, who had been one of Mustapha's pursuers, rose from the water, he saw an old man clinging to the side of an overturned shallop on the beach:

a soldier stood over the man, in the act of cutting him down.

The victim's white hair and supplicating action were more eloquent with Cesario than a thousand tongues. He ran towards him; and, wresting away the soldier's weapon, called on him to remember mercy.

The soldier retreated in sullen obedience; and the rescued person uttering a cry of joy, flung himself at Cesario's feet.

"I am not mistaken!" he exclaimed: "that look—that voice—O, signor, this is the second time!"

Cesario regarded the man, who spoke bad Italian with a Jewish accent; and, believing he had never seen him before, said gently, "You mistake me for some other; but I will nevertheless protect you from evil treatment. My name is Cesario Adimari."

The man regarded him earnestly,

while with an agitated voice he proceeded to recall himself to the recollection of Cesario.

He announced himself to be a Jew, belonging to one of the Greek islands under the dominion of Turkey, declaring that he had joined the Ottoman camp merely in the exercise of his business, as a provider of stores, &c. His first knowledge of Cesario, he acknowledged with lively gratitude, to have been at that period when the latter retook the inhabitants of a Tuscan village plundered by the Algerines.

This person, at that time accompanied by an only son, was passing through Italy on a mercantile speculation ; and, halting at this village, was amongst the prisoners.

“I have since lost that dear son,” said the old man, weeping : “he is dead ; but I shall never forget the joy I felt when our brave deliverer set him free.



And now again he saves these withered limbs from death or tortures! O that I could repay the debt I owe him!"

Cesario was moved by the apparent sensibility of Reuben (so the Jew was called); and, assuring him of his protection till he could learn the Grand Master's pleasure about the disposal of prisoners, he transferred him to the care of some faithful followers, and went in search of Rodolphe.

Rodolphe was not far distant; and though both his own body and that of Cesario gave bleeding testimony of their valiant share in the dangers of the day, they could ill brook the delay which was necessary for themselves and others, ere the army could set forth on its victorious march towards Il Borgo.

The troops loitered on the shore till the last Turkish sail disappeared from the horizon: then uttering a shout, some fell upon their knees in pious transport,

and others sunk to the ground, overcome with fatigue and pain.

The severely-wounded were then selected and sent off in litters to *La Citta Notabile*, the nearest quarters; while the rest of the troops, and those whose wounds did not deprive them of the use of their limbs, after a few hours' refreshment, began their march.

Thus ended a siege that had lasted above four months; during which time, a garrison not exceeding nine thousand men had withstood the attacks of an army thrice as numerous, supported too by a formidable fleet. And what enhanced the difficulty of the Christians' defence, was the determination and valour of their enemies.

Never had the infidels displayed such skill and such courage; and never had they been so valiantly outdone in both.

When the victorious army, after a short march, entered Il Borgo, they beheld it with a mixture of admiration and

regret : it seemed as if they came its conquerors rather than its preservers ; for every where it lay in ruins.

Fallen houses, shattered fortifications, destroyed magazines, attested the severe assaults it had sustained since Cesario's absence. The half-famished inhabitants slowly crawled among those melancholy remains, like so many spectres ; and the little remnant of knights, who, with their Grand Master, came forth to meet their more fortunate companions in arms, were covered with the honourable testimonies of their sufferings, and all pale and neglected, as if they had neither slept nor rested throughout that dreadful siege.

They advanced with slow and somewhat unsteady steps, for they were all well nigh worn to complete feebleness : each countenance, however, was bright with conscious desert, and gratitude to approving Heaven. At sight of this sacred band, all the knights who were

mixed with the fresh troops, broke tumultuously from their ranks, and ran to receive them in their arms.

Many were the embraces and tears of that affecting moment! Those who had gone through the horrors of the siege; thought of all they had vainly hoped might have lived to this joyful hour; and those who came, had each to learn the fall of friends or relations whom they had fondly expected to find in life.

As the magnanimous La Valette rested for a moment upon the shoulder of Cesario, their hearts laboured with the same sad remembrance: the name of Toledo was half-breathed between them; and their mutual tears embalmed his memory.

“Now, brave spirit!” said Cesario inwardly, as he rose in silence from the Grand Master’s embrace, apostrophising Toledo, “now thou art satisfied! — Thy father’s honour is retrieved.”

Wiping his darkened eyes, he gazed

round to note the faces of the surviving garrison. Only a few were familiar to him; the Order was nearly annihilated.

But with what respect did he look upon that band of heroes! With what overflowing love and admiration did he contemplate the wasted form and pallid countenance of La Valette!

That wasted form was still erect in all the majesty of an unbending mind; and that countenance, beaming with magnanimity, gave assurance that the impregnable part of Malta had lain in the character of her prince.

The standards of St. John, floating from all the Christian and Turkish batteries, completed this august picture.

As Cesario's agitated eye ran a second time over the surrounding knights, he missed two whom he had left in the ardour of youth and enthusiasm: their names escaped him unawares. "Marco Doria — Henri La Valette!" he exclaimed.

“ Doria is desperately, I fear mortally wounded ;” said the Grand Master, replying to him in a low firm voice, “ and Henri’s earthly race is done.”

He turned his eyes upwards as he spoke, with the look of the patriarch when about to offer up his only son in sacrifice.

Cesario’s blood ran cold — he pressed his hand upon his eyes: La Valette looked on him while he did so, with a powerful expression of affection and sadness ; then, struggling against a sigh, called on all present to attend him to the church in the town.

After immediate and public thanksgiving, the foreign and home troops dispersed into different quarters ; and each individual was then left free to prosecute the private enquiries prompted by lingering hopes or mourning affection.

## CHAPTER IX.

AFTER having learned the pleasure of La Valette respecting the prisoners taken during the late engagement, Cesario's first act was to seek his Jewish captive, and place him under the care of Rodolphe.

Humanity would have prompted this, had not hope been there as a stimulant; he thought it possible to gain some information of his friend from Reuben, and with this view he questioned him.

From the barbarous policy of the Turks, their number of Christian prisoners was so few that such a one as Giovanni could not be overlooked: Reuben had seen him; Reuben could tell the story of his miraculous deliverance;

and the substance of what he related was briefly this : —

When the ferocious orders of Mustapha were executing upon the bodies of the slain and dying knights at St. Elmo, a Turkish officer recognised that of Giovanni, yet warm with life. This young man, whose name was Morad, had been second in command of the vessel captured by Giovanni in the Santa Croce; and Giovanni's noble treatment of him, and flattering admiration of his gallant conduct upon that occasion, had awakened in his heart perhaps the strongest sentiment of gratitude ever felt by an infidel for a Christian.

Morad was retaken by his own countrymen during the siege; and being nephew to Mustapha himself, was enabled to protect the man who had formerly protected him.

With that habitual prostration of mind as well as body, which is ever found in the slaves of slaves, he threw himself at



the Basha's feet, kissing the dust, and imploring him in the humblest terms to grant him the disposal of this still-bleeding corse: he recapitulated all the obligations he owed to Giovanni; expressing his abhorrence of treating with indignity the remains of one who had sheltered him from insult and degradation. Giovanni's interference, he said truly, had saved him from the gallies, the usual lot of prisoners taken in war.

Mustapha was, for a long time, inexorable; at length, spurning that noble and weltering form with his foot, he bade his nephew do what he chose with it: Morad eagerly seized this ungracious permission.

He bore his prize to his tent; and there, all that a naturally-feeling nature could dictate was exerted to stop that effusion of blood which had already reduced the beatings of Giovanni's heart so fearfully, that they were imperceptible.

to the hand which so anxiously sought pulsation.

Morad was assisted in his grateful task by his own people, and by a surgeon of some ability belonging to the camp. The bleeding once stopped, (though a work of infinite difficulty,) life began to re-appear; the arteries slowly recovered their visible motion, and towards evening Giovanni just opened his eyes; he closed them again immediately, his powers being too weak for observation, nay, even for thought.

In this state he remained many days; but though outwardly the same, nature was inwardly rallying and repairing all her losses. In a little time afterwards he became conscious of what was passing around him, and by slow degrees recovered the faculty of speech and of motion.

His protector's life thus preserved, Morad believed himself more than ever bound to defend him; and though the

Basha's hatred of Giovanni, whom he looked upon as the most formidable individual hostile to Mahomet, was unappeasable, Morad wrung from him a promise that Giovanni's life should be held sacred, even though the chances of war might take away that of his guardian. Therefore while Morad lived, Reuben, who had heard this recital from one of his slaves, used to see Giovanni, at times, walking at large through the camp, shackled only by honour.

But Morad was slain upon that momentous Thursday which Giovanni had dreaded for his brethren in Il Borgo: the Knight of St. John then fell solely into the hands of Mustapha, after which Reuben saw him no more. He could only say, that he heard the Basha kept his word, and that his prisoner lived.

“And where was he, know you, in the last action?” asked the agitated, almost despairing Cesario, after having

listened with gratitude and hope to the first part of this narration.

“Of course in one of the ships,” was Reuben’s answer; “the Basha did not reland his sick nor his prisoners, when he disembarked his army again.”

“We have no hope then, but in gold,” exclaimed Cesario, after a long and troubled train of thought; “and if gold cannot ransom him, they shall have my liberty for his.” He went out, after this vain determination, anxious to perform his grateful duty to the Prince of Melfi, by hastening to render every service to his son.

He found Marco Doria quite delirious from fever, and in a state of such suffering, that but for the miraculous instance of recovery which Reuben had just detailed, Cesario would not have indulged a thought of his life. He now questioned the medical persons round, upon their opinion of him; and, finding that nearly all would depend upon the constant

watchfulness of one person night and day for a given period, he determined to be that person; and to save, if possible, the father's heart from a second and a heavier blow.

Ere he entered upon this benevolent duty, Cesario went to the residence of the Grand Master, and besought an audience of him. His business was to speak of Giovanni.

The information he had to give, and the petition he had to offer, were addressed to one nearly as warmly interested in the liberation of Giovanni, as Cesario was himself. La Valette entered into every detail with the liveliest interest. The path they had to pursue was plain he thought, and would most likely be successful: it was to negotiate with the Porte for the release of the few prisoners taken during the siege, and to purchase Giovanni's freedom at any price.

Although the funds of the Order were entirely drained by the late ruinous con-

test, and many of their possessions pledged to different states for monies already expended, their credit was now higher than ever ; and La Valette assured Cesario, with generous pride, that neither his mite in addition, nor any part of Giovanni's own property would be accepted, to re-purchase his invaluable life from the infidels.

He further added that a channel of communication should be immediately opened between Malta and Constantinople ; and that Giovanni's freedom should be the very first subject of negociation. Meanwhile the Turkish prisoners were to be strictly guarded and retained in the hands of the knights ; and the Porte informed that whatever acts of wanton severity it might exercise upon the captive Christians, should be retaliated upon its own people.

Cheered and satisfied by this liberal plan, Cesario returned to Marco Doria, by whose bed he took his station for

fourteen days and nights. At the end of that time, Marco was pronounced out of danger, and Cesario rewarded for so long a period of watching and painful anxiety by that assurance, and by his patient's recognition.

No sooner was Marco permitted to converse, than Cesario found that whatever alteration the late great events had made in him, they had not abated his passion for desultory talk. He roved over a thousand different topics in a moment; passing from the terrible to the ludicrous, and thence to the sad, with the rapidity of a mind which had never dwelt long enough on any one subject to fatigue or so deeply interest him as to leave him indisposed for excursions upon whatever airy nothings might start up in his way. Among the numerous subjects which Marco treated, was the character and conduct of Beatrice Brignoletti.

At the first mention of that name, Cesario started as if he had trodden

upon an adder; but, recovering himself with laudable disdain of his own weakness, he said, "This feeling of shame, Marco, is only a right penalty for my past folly: I assure you, I have been long since cured of my insane passion for that pernicious, infatuating——"

"Hold, hold! don't call names, or I'll swear your heart is not sound yet," cried Marco. "However, for the comfort of you lovers of fair and perfect beauty, I will tell you, that one look at her now would cure you! A green and yellow melancholy has eaten up the damask of her cheek."

Cesario's cheek blanched at this unexpected information; a thousand painful recollections thronged on him at once, and gave a reason for this change which penetrated his soul.

"When! where did you see this?" asked he, in a voice not quite as steady as he could have wished.

"I met her last in Sicily," replied



Marco. "Six weeks ago, when I was soliciting the succours, she and the Marchesa had just returned from a voyage to Spain, whither she had thought fit to go, to dissipate past chagrins; and I saw her not five hours after her landing at Messina."

"And there, I suppose, she heard of Giovanni's reported fall?"

"Yes; I told her."

"You told her?—Then, what a scene you must have witnessed!"—and Cesario put his hand upon his eyes, as if to shut out the fancied sight of her agonies.

In spite of his bodily weakness and real concern for what he believed the lingering passion of Cesario, Marco burst into a fit of laughter. When his astonished friend saw that it was downright mirth, and not the frightful violence of an hysterical affection, he turned severely from him, and rose to leave the room.

"Pardon me!" cried the half-alarmed

Marco; "laughter, you know, is the vice of my nature. Not even the horrors of this siege have cured me of it; though," added he, in a graver tone, "they have soberized my heart, and will prevent me from playing the fool in life's pantomime again: but to look wise at the folly of others, is more than I can promise; and it was so irresistibly ludicrous to compare the picture which I know your imagination drew of Beatrice's conduct, with what I saw in the reality, that my risible propensity could not stand it! At the moment I met her in Messina, she was in the agonies of despair for the desertion of a certain Don Antonio or Alphonso; and so listened to the tale of Giovanni's fate, as if I were talking of the man in the moon."

Cesario put his hand over his eyes again, but from a different feeling.

"Her Spanish lover," continued Marco, "released himself from her chains on the public report of her former co-

quetries ; and she is now, (alas, my poor cousin ! ) the object of universal ridicule and contempt. For herself, she may feel ; and that is her punishment : but for any sympathy, now, with you or Giovanni, you may as well look for it in that butterfly. Depend on it, my dear Adimari, there are no hearts so cold, when once chilled, as those which are so soon and so violently set in a blaze ! ”

“ That is a very wise apophthegm of yours,” observed Cesario, trying at a careless air, but inwardly and deeply shocked at this indelicacy and hardness in Beatrice ; “ and so, I will leave you to meditate upon it ! ” He withdrew abruptly.

“ And there are no hearts so impossible to be recalled,” he said to himself, following up the last remark of Marco’s, “ as those which would have adhered to the chosen object through every change of time and fortune, had they not been wantonly repelled. Such hearts bear

much—bear long : but once stung to the quick by injury or contempt, their keen sense is not to be dulled by all the opiates of future artifice, or future acted penitence.”

During the many reflections consequent on this conversation with Marco, Cesario’s most powerful conviction was one which Giovanni had always urged upon him,—That, however we may suffer under afflictions, the period always comes in which we recognise their beneficial effect, either upon our character or our fate.

Cesario had lived, as Giovanni used to prophecy, to consider his loss of Beatrice as a blessing rather than a misfortune. What would have been his misery, had he been united to her, and waking from the enchantment of imagination, found himself bound for life to one whose heart would cease to have any sympathy with his, the moment it ceased to regard him with passion ?

He shuddered at the possibility of such a situation ; and giving a sigh of commiseration to the fading beauty of the now-contemned Beatrice, sincerely prayed that she might from those timely chastisements be brought to turn her eyes inwards, and discipline her feelings into that order which would eventually produce for her both respect and happiness.

From the image of one who might well have made all female worth suspected, Cesario naturally reverted to that of Donna Camilla ; and, as the convalescence of Marco Doria allowed him to cross over to the isle De la Sangle, he went to visit the grave which contained her and Toledo.

As he passed over the ground which he had last trod with that gallant friend, when side by side they stemmed the torrent of the infidels, so many recollections pressed upon him, that he scarcely knew how he should stand the view of

the actual spot where that hapless pair slept their last sleep.

Was it right, he thought, thus to increase the sum of human wretchedness by courting painful emotions?

Both his heart and his reason answered, yes.

We are told that "it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better:" and if we do not abandon ourselves to that continued indulgence of sorrow, which incapacitates us from the performance of worldly duties, we may be assured that our dispositions are softened, our hearts purified, our minds elevated, and our sympathies extended, by an occasional renewal of such impressions as strongly revive the images of departed friends.

At the moment of Cesario's entrance into the cemetery, a clouded moon shone at intervals through the fir-trees which

grew near the grave of Toledo and Camilla. The cemetery overlooked the sea, whence a hollow wind came rushing, and, shaking the heads of the old fig-trees, strewed their sun-withered leaves over the mound below.

No other foot but that of Cesario's disturbed the stillness of that narrow mound: no living object was visible; and Cesario, solitary in the dreary scene, felt as if that wailing wind and those murmuring waves were joining the lamentations of his oppressed heart.

Not even the recollection of Giovanni still living, and preserved most likely to be more entirely the companion of his soul than ever, could abate the anguish with which he cast himself on that grave. His lips instinctively repeated the names of Camilla and Toledo, and his arms vainly embraced the earth which covered them.

Nothing replied to that afflicted embrace. The deep silence which followed

each sad address, only deepened the conviction that they upon whom he called, were indeed no more.

O the desolation of such convictions! and how often do we lose them only to suffer again and again the acute pain of their renewal!

Cesario's short life had been full of great calamities; and he did not feel the deaths of Toledo and Camilla as the least of them.

While he thought over all the comfort those friends had been to him under his heaviest affliction, and imagined the happiness which they might have heightened for him, he could not forbear questioning the reason for his many trials. He found it in his own character: for he remembered all the faults of that character, and he felt its amendment: calamity had been his teacher.

He then endeavoured to calm his present feelings by reflecting how many besides himself were bereaved by this cruel



siege, not only of valued friends, but of their nearest and dearest relatives. The chances of war had been comparatively merciful to him; for he had escaped himself, and Giovanni survived, to whom his life was every thing. Rodolphe's safety too, and the recovery of Marco Doria, were not mercies of small account.

Subdued by this balance of his privations and his possessions, Cesario's grief at length subsided into that profound but unresisting melancholy which it is not culpable to feel, and which it is not misery to indulge. He left the cemetery, a proof that it is good to go into the house of mourning; for he left it with stronger convictions of Heaven's wisdom and goodness.

A real pleasure awaited him at Il Borgo: the Prince of Melfi was arrived there.

When this gallant seaman returned

from Genoa with permission to follow the dictates of his own brave spirit, (on his own conditions of indemnifying the republic for her gallies, if obliged to abandon them;) he heard there that the siege was raised : but the joy of this welcome intelligence was cruelly damped by the painful account of his son's danger ; and, re-embarking immediately, the anxious father set sail in a single ship for Malta.

Cesario found him by the couch of Marco, listening to his lively sallies, and perusing his altered appearance with a mixture of cheerfulness and apprehension.

The traces of tears were on the veteran's weather-darkened cheeks ; but his eyes smiled ; and when he saw Cesario enter, he started up and clasped him in his arms.

“ Welcome, Adimari, welcome !” he cried, repeating that heart-felt pressure at every breath. “ They tell me Marco

owes his life to your care ; what, then, do I owe you ?”

The father took Cesario’s hand within both his, as he loosened him from his embrace ; and Cesario then felt that he had put a ring upon his finger. He raised his hand to the light, in compliment to the donor ; but seeing the diamond which had belonged to his father, he started and would have torn it off.

Doria held it forcibly on, beseeching him with such earnestness and affection to retain it, that Cesario’s distress was insupportable. “ You know that I received it from you in the earliest hour of our acquaintance, as a pledge to be one day redeemed,” continued the generous Prince, still keeping his hand firmly upon that of Cesario. “ How would you have it more nobly won back than by this second benefit conferred on me and mine ? would it please you better to buy it with ducats ?”

“ And have you the audacity to rate

an effeminate bauble higher than my soul and body?" asked Marco gaily; "for, as I mean henceforth to become a very good-for-something personage; and, had I died, I must have gone where those spirits went, which our Dante describes as

———"Wretched souls, who lived,  
Without or praise or blame,"

I must be considered as a soul saved by you. Put the ring fairly upon your finger, and make my father happy."

Cesario turned his eyes upon that respectable father, and met so kind, so grateful, and entreating a look, that it quite vanquished him.

He put the ring to his lips, his face all bright with tears, and his heart all full of his lamented parent. He then kissed the Prince's hand without the power of articulating a reply, and sat down by the couch of Marco.

The conversation, when resumed, turned upon Giovanni. Of his final liberation Doria would not allow himself to

doubt, though he warned Cesario to prepare for vexatious delays and difficulties which the Turks would certainly start to enhance the price of his ransom.

Warmly grateful for present hope, Cesario believed himself prepared for all future anxieties, provided they did not threaten that cherished hope with destruction; and he now entered with eager interest into Doria's calculation of the time which must elapse before they could learn the event of their applications at Constantinople to the Sultan Solyman.

As the negociation had to reach the still-hostile Porte by a circuitous channel, no immediate agent from Malta being admitted, it must necessarily be drawn out to some length; a circumstance which it required all Cesario's best reasonings to bear without repining: but, cheered by the presence and sympathy of Prince Doria, strengthened by the calmer arguments of La Valette, and obliged to animate the desponding Ro-

dolphe, he contrived to wear out the days and weeks which intervened between the departure of the Turkish fleet and the arrival of an answer respecting the redemption of prisoners.

That answer fell like a thunderbolt. For the few prisoners made by the butchering Turks during the siege, the Porte were willing to receive their own captured soldiers, with the addition of suitable ransoms: but for Giovanni Cigala, they would not accept any sum. That which rendered him inestimable to the Order made him pernicious to its enemies: his bravery, his skill, his reputation made it an act of policy in the Sultan not to use his authority over Mustapha.

Mustapha, at this crisis, was in no humour to yield any thing to humanity: his passions were all inflamed by defeat and mortification, and the sharp rebukes of his master; he therefore swore that no treasure should buy from him that hated

Christian, whose arm and counsels so often triumphed over the best heads and swords of Turkey ; that nothing short of his imperial master's command should make him relinquish the savage pleasure of revenging upon the most esteemed of the knights, the shame and vexation with which the Grand Master's victory had overwhelmed him.

This sentence was definitive ; for La Valette's agent, having previously received instructions how to act, in case such scarcely credible obstinacy should be opposed to their wishes, had left neither importunities nor temptations untried to win the Mussulman from his fierce determination.

Mustapha, however, was not to be conquered here ; and, repeating his resolution for the last time, never afterwards admitted the baffled negociator into his presence.

The shock of this disappointment, though communicated with the utmost

caution by the Grand Master himself to Cesario, almost crushed him : it was long before his dismayed faculties recovered their power ; and when they did so, he remained fixed in intense thought for a much longer period ; then abruptly rising, he left the presence of La Valette, unconscious that he had not replied to his sad communication.

In truth, his friend was absorbed in the consideration of a project which had struck him ; and solely intent upon that one object, he forgot every thing else.

He went straight to the place where his Jewish prisoner was lodged, and entering to him, said precipitately,—“ Reuben, you profess to be obliged to me ; your looks express it, even more than your words ; therefore I believe it. — Would you serve me in return ? ”

“ With all my means, I am sure,” replied the old man ; “ and I think, with my life too, if that were absolutely necessary.”



Cesario regarded him for a moment with a countenance expressive of the various feelings by which he was agitated ; then trying to steady his fluttered breath, said, “ I take you at your word. And now to tell you of the service I require of you : — No ransoms will be accepted for Giovanni Cigala ; but if I die, or become a slave myself, he shall be set free. I tell you openly, that I will immediately attempt this ; though, as yet, I know not where he may be, nor how to reach him ; nor after that, how to get him away : but it is my resolution never to rest while he lives, until I effect his escape. Can you assist me in this ? — Will you do so, if I procure your enlargement for this express purpose ? ”

Reuben’s sallow face brightened with glad surprise : “ O my lord ! ” he exclaimed, “ I will do any thing, every thing, so that your precious life is not endangered.”

Cesario pressed his hand, and more distinctly stated his wishes.

Several plans were then started and examined ; and at last it was settled, that Reuben should be set at liberty, and return into his own country, accompanied by Cesario disguised as one of the same race.

Cesario spoke the *lingua Franca* familiarly ; and had heard enough of the modern Greek, during his voyage to the Levant, as warranted his belief of soon acquiring it entirely, from the instructions of Reuben. Fortunately, his person was not adverse to the imposture ; for the Asiatic character of his eyes and complexion, and the Grecian line of his features, might easily enable him to pass current for a native of Greece, when it might be essential for him to be so represented.

During the latter time of the siege, he, in common with the knights, had suffered his beard to grow uncared for :

thus he wanted nothing but a black gaberdine and a different demeanour to make him a complete Israelite. The one was easily procured, and the other he could possess himself of by contracting his open chest, and substituting a slow crouching pace for the liberal air and martial step of his former habits.

Reuben's house was in Zante ; thither it would be expedient for them to repair, and there endeavour to learn whether Mustapha (to whom the vacant government of Santa Maura was just given, as a sort of honourable banishment, by his irritated master,) had brought his captive along with him.

That circumstance ascertained, Reuben assured Cesario, that he thought a liberal command of money for bribes, and extreme discretion in its use, would be likely to procure Giovanni's enlargement from some of Mustapha's inferior agents ; and, if that method failed, they must then be guided by circumstances in

whatever enterprise they might attempt for his release by stratagem.

As it was indispensable to the success of their measures, that no one should suspect the real character of Cesario, Reuben warned him that he must accompany him to the synagogue, and conform in all things to the usages of their worship. Cesario was at first startled by this proposal; but a moment's consideration convinced him that, in complying with this necessity, he was not violating any principle; he was not denying the Saviour who declared that he came, not to do away the law, but to fulfil it.

The religion of Moses formed part of every Christian religion; and Cesario might therefore, without impiety, join in a worship which was but imperfect, not profane.

Having explained this to Reuben, who bowed in silent respect, they renewed their league of fidelity to each other.

Transformed into a new creature by

hope and impatience, Cesario flew back to La Valette, to acquaint him with his plan, and arrange a mode of obtaining money whenever it might be wanted for the great emergency they anticipated.

He had to seek the Grand Master: he found him in the apartment of Marco Doria, rewarding him for all his sufferings, by eulogiums given in the presence of his delighted father.

Not one of the three attempted to dissuade Cesario from his enterprise; but the elder ones bade him remember how much he risked by thus trusting himself to the good faith of a man almost unknown to him,—a Jew, and the subject of the very power which opposed Giovanni's release.

“ You may wander for a year or two among those islands,” said Doria, “ without finding out your friend's prison; or succeeding in his escape. What will become of your prospects in our Marine meanwhile?”

“ I can have no prospect but one at present,” replied Cesario with animation, “ Let me but regain Giovanni, and I’ll take my chance for my future life. — The seigniory may efface my name from the navy of the Republic, but, thank Heaven, they cannot blot out my services! And the man who has had a post here, may defy neglect or injustice hereafter.”

“ Proudly spoken!” exclaimed Marco, with a laugh.

“ Nobly !” observed La Valette, turning upon the inconsiderate Marco, “ Young man, never be ashamed to show that you know your own value : for unless we estimate our qualities, we shall not long preserve them. There is no dignity of character without a modest consciousness of worth : remember that ; and neither think yourself culpable nor ridiculous, when *you* feel a heart-glow at the mention of the siege of Malta.”

The benignity of La Valette’s smile, as he uttered the last sentence, softened the

effect of his awful eye-beam when he began this reproof: Marco bowed and blushed; while his brave father thanked his instructor in his son's name, both for the compliment and the lesson.

The conversation then reverted to the original subject; and having discussed it under various points of view, and received many valuable hints from his two elder friends, Cesario departed.

He went out from them with a buoyant spirit, for he had obtained every thing he asked. Reuben's liberty was freely given; and La Valette had promised to receive Rodolphe into his own residence, and be watchful over him during the absence of Cesario.

Cesario's only hard task remained: the task of convincing Rodolphe, that in leaving him behind, Cesario was doing violence to his own feelings; from a conviction that Giovanni's freedom might depend upon the facility of flight from whatever place he might be confined in.

Of course the greater the number of persons to be disguised, the more would their difficulties be multiplied; consequently Cesario believed it his duty to go singly.

As he expected, when Rodolphe heard the projected enterprise, and found that he was to have no share in it, his disappointment nearly amounted to distraction.

All at once his intellect seemed hopelessly, obstinately dull; for still he repeated, that he cared not for danger, that he was ready to die, or yield himself to slavery for his master.

“Ready to do every thing, my good Rodolphe, but the only thing which you *can* do to further his cause!” said Cesario, tenderly, but firmly: “I repeat to you, that if I thought your master’s liberty could be purchased by your loss of freedom, or by your life, since you are willing to give either for him, I would allow you to make the sacrifice.



But I tell you neither will avail : your total ignorance of the people and places amongst which I must go, would prevent you from knowing how to make one practicable attempt for his service, however ardent your zeal might be ; therefore you could not undertake this enterprise alone : and I have already stated to you, why it is an enterprise for one person only.

“ You are anxious to evince your attachment and gratitude to your master : do it by conquering yourself. Believe me, he will fully estimate the greatness of the sacrifice : he will know how little it would cost a brave man to die for him ; — and how much, a grateful heart, to refrain from impeding his escape by indulging in the display of its gratitude. Consider ! — after we had managed his rescue, we might be so circumstanced as to have a limited mode of getting away — some boat that could receive only one — two : some disguise, that could not with

plausibility be assumed by more than that number. Would your master abandon his faithful Rodolphe upon such an occasion? No; he would stay, and be retaken."

Poor Rodolphe held down his head. "I see it now!" he said, contending with the bitterness of his disappointment; "go then, Signor Adimari. — You are very happy!"

Cesario now pressed his hand with great kindness; and, soothing this laudable sensibility with a mixture of condolence and agreeable prophecies, he succeeded in calming that extreme turbulence of feeling, which had at first armed itself even against reason.

His arrangements after that, were quickly made: Reuben did not loiter; so that early in October, they set sail for Sicily, and thence in a neutral ship, with a favourable wind, for the Ionian sea,

## CHAPTER X.

THERE had been a time, when the mere prospect of beholding Greece would have roused the whole soul of Cesario, and conjured up all those mighty dead, who yet live in history: but those noble associations were so troubled now, by personal knowledge of Grecian degradation, and by anxiety for the result of his present enterprise, that he approached those memorable shores, at first without enthusiasm; but at length his senses gradually awakened to new and delightful impressions.

As he entered the channel which divides the Island of Cephalaria from that of Zante, the perfumed air which is said to float sensibly from the bowery shores

of the latter, stole on his sense, diffusing a sensation of delicious refreshment and of soothing tranquillity.

The rising moon shed her tremulous light above the mountains of the Morea, illuminating, as she continued to rise, the distant hills of Epirus, and the shores of the Peloponnesus.

As his vessel glided through the silver sea, Reuben pointed out the far-off gulf of Corinth on one side, and on the other the verdant steeps of Arcadia. Cesario gazed on them with a kindling wish to take in all those memorable regions at a single view : he was at once seized by the sudden and awful power of the illustrious Past.

What innumerable shades then peopled the void of air to his entranced sight !— He saw heroes, and sages, and bards, pass in majestic review before him ; while his rapid memory ran over, with the celerity of light, the noble records which sanctify their names.

The vessel, meanwhile, slowly floated forwards, passing vineyards, and olive-grounds, and orange-groves, alternately embosomed in deep vallies, or glittering on the sides of hills. When they entered the bay of Zante, Cesario's thoughts changed: he remembered the time when he last passed its chalky boundaries; and he thought of Genoa.

The city, lying along a semicircular and broken hill, and the bay extending between steep wooded cliffs, had that general resemblance to his native place, which is sufficient to melt the heart with fond recollections of home.

The waters of the bay were sparkling like diamonds in the moonlight; and a solitary wind-instrument, sounding at intervals from the woods on the height where the castle stands, gave additional effect to the touching charms of night and meditation.

"Beautiful scenes!" involuntarily sighed Cesario, gazing around, "am I to

remember ye in after days, with aversion, or with pleasure !,— are ye to restore to me my friend ?”

He turned at the troubled voice of Reuben. The old man had left a daughter at Zante in such delicate health from recent affliction, that he dreaded to ascertain her present state. He now spoke of this daughter and of her children, (for she was a widow, with a family,) in so affectionate a style, that Cesario felt reassured upon the subject of his fidelity ; and he thought justly, that strong virtuous affections are nearly always, the guarantees of integrity.

Happily, on disembarking and repairing to his home, Reuben found his daughter in life and comparative health : her joy at seeing him was an additional testimony to the worth of her father, and Cesario failed not to register it.

Reuben had his own plan of policy : and, presenting Cesario, to her as a young man of their own race, whose freedom

he had purchased in consideration of his friendly attentions and useful talents, he deplored the high rate at which their joint release had been procured.

To have spoken of the Christians as generous or humane, would have been to destroy the whole scheme he had laid in his own mind for the redemption of Giovanni; and, though perhaps it mattered little at Zante, should the opinions he delivered there, be contradicted by what he must eventually utter at Santa Maura, the great theatre of his subsequent measures, the discordance of the two might defeat his purpose.

Reuben was sincerely grateful; and Reuben would indeed have done much to prove this: but the life for which he held himself so bound in gratitude, was, from a certain feebleness of character, wonderfully dear to him; and he sought out, therefore, every artifice to prevent it from being endangered.

The liberation of Giovanni, he felt

convinced, must be effected through the subordinate agents of the obstinate and arrogant Basha. They would most probably be tempted by a great bribe to set him free: but should it be otherwise, he deemed it wise to have an extenuating plea for his own conduct, in case that should be called into question.

This plea was to be necessity: instead of negotiating for the release of the Christian knight, with an acknowledgment of deep interest in it, Reuben meant to represent the folly of the Basha (to those he intrusted with the care of Giovanni) in refusing the enormous ransom offered by the Order. He meant to insinuate to them, that if they would contrive to deliver the prisoner into his hands, so as it might appear he had escaped of himself, he would obtain the offered ransom from Malta, and faithfully share it with them. Thus the Basha's officer or officers would become masters of a considerable sum, and Reuben be



enabled out of his slender share to make up to his family for the grievous price he had been obliged to give for his own freedom.

Reuben's story was not doubted at Zante; and as Cesario, (though he marvelled at the old man's plausible inventions, and imposing gravity in narrating them,) never contradicted his fabulous tortures in the dungeon of St. Angelo, he passed for a very suffering and incensed man, — one, certainly, not in the least likely to aid the schemes of a Christian.

To support the character of poverty, Reuben lived with marked frugality, keeping his supposed servant in constant occupation, for the avowed purpose of thus working out what the other had laid down for his purchase. Cesario was thus obliged to bend his spirit to all but absolutely servile tasks: these, Reuben had the address to save him from, though he certainly saw with secret complacency

all he gained by the forced industry of his noble associate.

Nature had given Cesario a strong, mechanical genius; and during the siege he had not unfrequently been obliged to exercise this genius, while sharing with the other officers the laborious offices of the common men.

Amongst these had been the repairing and cutting down of small vessels: and now, to afford Cesario regular occupation, removed from the prying crowd that frequented his employer's warehouse in the city, and to prepare for their anticipated emergency, Reuben set about refitting and improving a damaged vessel which he bought at a low rate, purposing, he said, to freight her, when completed, with the products of his currant-vineyards and bees, for some friendly port in Italy.

Perhaps, he said, he might touch at one or two of the neighbouring islands, as he went along, to collect their peculiar mer-

chandise for disposal abroad. Meanwhile it behoved him to labour at making up his losses, by getting this vessel put into a state fit for sea, whenever his cargo should be ready.

The information which Reuben received about the Basha rendered this management necessary : for it was likely that they must wait some time longer in Zante ; and if all that time no determinate business had been given to Cesario, first curiosity would have been excited, and next suspicion.

The Basha, it was ascertained, had left Constantinople, and was slowly proceeding through Rumania to Albania, where it was likely he would sojourn at the residence of his son, before he came to his new government ; and as an escape was easier made from an island exactly opposite the Calabrian coast than from the inner land of Greece, Cesario was obliged to confess that his best chance of success lay in waiting patiently at Zante, till they

should hear that the Basha was settled in Santa Maura. At such a time Reuben would undertake to transport himself and his servant thither without suspicion; for then he would freight his ship, and proceed to Santa Maura under pretence of taking in both her products and those of the country behind, for sale in foreign ports.

So far every thing went smoothly: Cesario's inclination to trust Reuben was changed into habitual confidence. He was assured of his prudence, though not always pleased with the artifices it dictated; and he often found relief from over anxious thoughts in the sports and caresses of Tamar's children.

Humanity soon supplied him with another interest, powerful enough to moderate the impatience with which he counted the days, and at last weeks, of Mustapha's slow progress.

Reuben's living-house was situated in one of those romantic valleys found

among the broken cliffs of Akroteria. Through a vista of olive-woods, the sea and part of the Cephalonian mountains were visible ; while on the verdant eminences overhanging the valley, hung groves of fruit-trees.

His boat-yard lay farther down towards the shore ; and there it joined the unpicturesque warehouse and extensive premises of an opulent female Greek, the widow of a trader in the natural commerce of the island.

This woman still carried on the same traffic upon the same scale, employing a number of persons in the manufacture of oils and wines, the culture of currant-vineyards, and the management of bees.

The lowest and most laborious details of these various branches of trade, she assigned to slaves of both sexes, purchased out of Turkish corsairs. Some of these wretched creatures were employed both in the business of the house and of the manufactory ; and so entirely

were their sex and constitution disregarded by their inconsiderate task-mistress, and so miserably were they fed, that many of them appeared within a few hours of dissolution.

The boat-yard of Reuben, on one side, opened into a common piece of ground, in which stood an ancient fountain overhung by pomegranates; and a plane-tree seemingly as ancient as the fountain. The slaves of Lydia, (so the Greek trader was called,) often came thither to fetch water; so that Cesario had frequent opportunities of marking their wretched and fatigued looks, and hearing their dismal complaints.

Amongst these unhappy beings, he particularly noticed one young woman, whose figure, though more wasted and languid than any of the others, was distinguished by an elegance of air which not even her coarse garments could entirely conceal. Exact proportion (that integral part of beauty) was to be traced in her

equally slender form ; the same sea-breeze which defined the symmetry of her slight limbs, sometimes lifting the quantity of dull hair which shaded her sallow face, discovered features which, if rounded by health and happiness, would have mocked the chissel of Grecian sculpture. Now, those features were but expressive of sickness and suffering : the cheeks were pale and hollow ; and the smooth brow to which nineteen summers would only have given more smoothness, was contracted by habitual care and fear.

A mortal weight hung on her half-closed lids : yet now and then, from beneath those heavy lids, Cesario marked a look of dying sweetness steal from her humid eyes while they wandered from earth to heaven, as if hopeless of relief from aught below.

Often did his ear catch, and his heart feel, the heavy sigh which accompanied this silent appeal : for Cesario was drawn to the fountain by solicitude for Tamar's

children, who, attracted by the wild berries that grew near it, and by the fruit of the pomegranates which overhung the well, pursued their sports, heedless of danger.

Cesario often observed the eyes of Zeila, for by that name he one day heard the young slave summoned to her hard toil, fixed tearfully upon those innocent and happy little creatures, while an expression, at once sad and tender, softened the wilder character of suffering which marked her countenance. She seemed either envying them or regretting some object they recalled; and though she never attempted to engage their attention or win from them a single caress, it was evident she had pleasure in looking at them.

With prompt humanity, Cesario soon discovered Zeila's stated periods of coming to the fountain, and then he always contrived to be within sight; when he would run and fill the pitchers for her,



accompanying the kind action with expressions of concern and sympathy.

At first, Zeila received these benevolent attentions in dejected and unaltered silence, and retired immediately. But by degrees she evinced more sensibility : an unsteady colour would flit like supernatural light over her cheek, and tears sparkle through the long fringes of her downcast eyes.

The familiar intercourse of near neighbourhood, and the occasional want of mutual assistance, often drew Cesario into the grounds and offices of Lydia's manufactory ; he there saw Zeila almost constantly, sinking under tasks far, far beyond her strength ; and of so servile a nature, that when he contrasted them with her silent dignity of manner and matchless elegance, he felt assured that her lot was very different from her birth.

Once he came upon her unexpectedly at the hour of dinner, and heard her say

rapidly to herself in Italian, “ No more! no more! — though I die!”

He advanced, and saw her place her scarcely-tasted portion of food at a distance; then totter back to a tree, where she supported herself trembling and breathless.

Her ghastly looks and moistened forehead, testified the toil that had exhausted her; he noticed it, and would have put the little flask of milk to her lips, but she sprang away with sudden power, repeating the first words she had ever addressed to him, — “ None! — none!”

This strange conduct made him imagine her brain disordered; and this suspicion, with the knowledge that she must be his countrywoman, only served to heighten his interest in her dismal destiny.

Zeila, however, did not inspire compassion only; some things she did, commanded esteem. In the cool of evening, when labour was suspended, Cesario often

met her supporting the feeble steps of a blind old slave, whose occupation was the construction of hives and baskets, and who was dependent upon the kindness of his fellow-slaves for recreation after his sightless task.

The old man, naturally peevish, was rendered still more so by his infirmities and his cruel condition; he therefore received Zeila's amiable cares, as if they had been so many injuries: still, however, Zeila persisted in rendering them. In truth, she had habituated herself to minister to his age, and submit to his humour, until he seemed actually to have forgotten that a feeling of resentment, once strongly roused in her, might leave him to all the misery of utter helplessness.

When Cesario heard that none but voluntary obligations tied her to this unreasonable and thankless person, and saw that she gently persevered, even in the midst of tears wrung from her by his unjust displeasure, he could not but admire

the Christian spirit which thus conquered natural disgust and lawful indignation, in compassion to the mental and bodily infirmities of old age under affliction.

Not long after Césario's nearer observation of Zeila, a fire broke out in that quarter of Lydia's store-houses, where her male slaves were lodged; it happened in the night, and but for the prompt activity of Cesario, who directed others how to render assistance, and gave it himself, at the imminent risk of his life, the whole suite of buildings must have been consumed, and many lives lost.

Some slaves had been laboriously preparing a cargo late the preceding night, for a ship that was to sail the next day, and, over-wearied, did not observe that they had left a lamp burning near some sheets of matting. Some accident of wind, or perhaps the falling of these mats within reach of the flame of the lamp, caused them to take fire, and other light materials catching, soon com-

municated to the quarter where the oils and pitch were kept: the blaze then became terrific. Cesario, who saw it through the olive-woods, from the lattice of his chamber where he sat reading, flew to render assistance. His presence and courage restored their faculties to the bewildered multitude, who were surrounding their shrieking mistress, incapable of attending to her entreaties that they would preserve her from utter ruin.

He instructed them what to do, to hinder the fire from spreading to the dwelling-house; and, exhorting them to continue the means already using, he mounted the flaming walls of the warehouse, to save the few persons there, who were unable to escape without help.

Zeila, in common with all the household of Lydia, was amongst those who witnessed the generous exertions of Cesario; and, while she ardently ejaculated a prayer for his preservation, she could not forbear calling on the name of the

poor blind old man. His infirmity and his fear had evidently prevented him from finding the windows by which it was now ascertained his fellow-sufferers had all selfishly escaped. At Zeila's cry, Cesario sprang from the ladder on which he was standing, direct into the open window of the dormitory: the poor terrified wretch was raving at the other end of it; but Cesario soon seized and bore him away.

When he leaped to the ground with his aged burden from a lower wall on which the ladder rested, he led him to Zeila, and, placing the old man's palsied hands in hers, he said kindly, "I give you *one* happy moment, Zeila!"

Zeila answered only by a look, which, for the instant, effaced every trace of suffering from her withered cheek.—Cesario felt the look enter his soul; but he hurried away to finish his benevolent duty.

Happily the fire was finally extinguished with much less loss of property than

its owner dared to hope ; and Lydia, sensible that she owed this blessing to Cesario's activity and courage, desired him to say in what way she could show her gratitude.

He evaded reply at that moment ; but the next day, when he encountered Zeila, he reminded her of Lydia's enquiry ; and besought her to say whether there were any thing she desired for herself, which his solicitation (thus invited) might obtain.

With tears of mournful admiration Zeila assured him that she was resigned to her lot ; but she noticed several minute grievances of individuals amongst her fellow-slaves, beseeching him in the name of that humanity which seemed to be the vital principle of his soul, to plead to Lydia for a removal of their hardships.

Old age and childhood were the chief objects of Zeila's compassion ; and Cesario, while he looked with passionate pity upon the condition of the generous

creature, who thus neglected her own relief for the sake of lightening the burdens of others; promised what she asked; sought, and after some delay, obtained it.

From that period Cesario's observation of Zeila, and interest in her fate, occupied him incessantly: he had never, he thought, pitied any one so much — never seen any so deserving of pity. He forgot that there were many of her fellow-slaves equally worthy of compassion; but they had neither touched his feelings by the contrast of their manners and situation, nor awakened his esteem by any visible show of generous concern for each other. Zeila, for her part, was for awhile transformed into a new creature: she came more frequently to the fountain; she even loitered there, caressing Tamar's children, and winning their little hearts by decorating their uncovered heads and arms with coronets and bracelets made of berries and flowers. If Cesario joined the sportive groupe, she yet remained;



her whole countenance lighting up with an expression, which recalled the memory of Donna Camilla's more animated face.

But Zeila soon ceased to exhibit these proofs of interest in Cesario, and this wish of courting happiness : a strange air of reserve and timidity and self-restraint, banished every appearance of confidence.

Cesario at first observed this to her ; but finding it continue, he receded in his turn, and sought her no more.

But though he sought her no more, something (he knew not what) brought him often where she was ; and then the instant she saw him, she would start away and vanish in the crowd of her toiling companions.

Once, however, when Cesario was sitting in deep thought upon a fallen ornament of the fountain, where Zeila had been hastily getting water undisturbed by him, he looked up and saw her whom he fancied gone, lingering near the en-

trance-gate, and regarding him wistfully and gratefully.

At meeting his eyes she swiftly turned away hers, with a blush of more than modest confusion, of self-censure ; and, gliding through the gate, did not reappear before him for some days.

At length, accidentally crossing a narrow dell, late one evening, he espied her on the overhanging bank of a stream which ran through it.

Treading lightly upon the smooth turf, which carpeted the ascent she was on, he came up to her unawares.

She was standing with clasped hands, gazing upon the water, as though

“ She sighed, and envied every stone  
Which peaceful at the bottom lay.”

Never before had Cesario been so struck with the perfect symmetry of her figure, which gave grace and almost beauty to the common foldings of her woollen veil : but all ideas of admiration were lost in

the more powerful sentiments of compassion and concern, when he caught sight of her face : its expression moved his very soul. " So young, so sad, so hopeless !" he said inwardly.

He advanced too hastily ; for Zeila, uttering a shriek of surprise, tottered, and fell down into the stream. Cesario was not an instant in leaping after her, and carrying her through the shallow rivulet to the flat ground on the opposite bank.

She was somewhat stunned by the fall ; and her head coming first into the water had got completely wet. As Cesario sat down under some myrtles, and supported her on his breast, he officiously wiped the long locks of her discomposed hair : he was surprised to see the dull colour of that hair transferred to his cloak (with which he had rubbed it), leaving in its place the hue he loved, because it was that of Giovanni's.

An ejaculation escaped him : Zeila

opened her half-closed lids, and, seeing his eyes fixed upon her altered hair, she blushed, and hastily gathered it up under the veil which had dropped from her head when she fell.

Without attempting to account for this circumstance, she tried to break from him ; but she trembled so, through excessive weakness and emotion, that she was unable to resist the hand that gently detained hers.

“ Why would you fly me ? ” asked Cesario in Italian, with a voice of tenderest pity, and eyes so benevolently kind, that their expression melted her at once : “ I would serve you, if it were in my power : — tell me, are you an Italian ? — I have been in Italy, and I could perhaps assist — ; if you have friends there, perhaps they might be able to buy your freedom, if they only knew — ” “ Might be able ! ” repeated Zeila, raising her eyes with desperate appeal to Heaven ; “ oh yes ! but they leave me to

perish here. Yet I have no right to complain!" and she threw down her eyes again, drowned in tears.

There was something inexpressibly touching in the tone of her voice as well as in her countenance. "What are your kindred then? where are they?" asked Cesario, earnestly regarding her.

"I will never name them," was Zeila's answer.

Cesario looked at her still more intently: "They must be monsters, if they know you are in captivity, and *can* ransom you, and will not."

"O, do not wrong them so!" exclaimed Zeila, bursting into tears, and trying once more to leave him.

Cesario grasped her trembling hand more firmly: "I cannot let you leave me, till you give me some clearer account of yourself. I do not ask this from motives of vain curiosity: your youth, your sex, your cruel sufferings affect me; and if I could assist in restor-

ing you to your country, it would give me true happiness. But I must know your Italian name, and the circumstances which placed you in this hard situation, otherwise I can do nothing."

"And what are you, that offer thus?" exclaimed Zeila, interrupting him with a look of astonishment. Cesario's eyes fell under the broad and noble light of hers, which an expression at once grateful, admiring, and expectant, rendered almost dazzling. He felt that he had committed himself by the indiscreet impetuosity with which he had spoken; and the idea of Giovanni crossed him with keen reproach: he was silent.

Zeila gently withdrew her hand from his now-slackened grasp, and, looking earnestly at him, said in a low voice,—“I see you have your secret, as well as I have mine,” (and she pointed to her discovered hair.) “Keep mine, as I shall keep yours, and let us pray for each other.”

The cloud of despair again obscured her brow, and, waiting not reply, she vanished among the trees.

It was impossible for Cesario to banish this incident from his thoughts. In the solitude of night, and the monotonous self-imposed tasks of the day, it recurred again and again; often stealing upon those reveries about Giovanni, which had hitherto occupied him to the exclusion of every thing else.

When he recalled the pathetic beauty of Zeila's eyes and voice, and the unutterable charms which a strong emotion spread over her whole countenance, in light, and colour, and expression, he was amazed to think she should be devoted to such sordid employments as those she executed.

But what was the alternative? either such a base life of drudgery, or the pollutions of a Haram! Cesario felt the possibility of the latter strike him like an ice-bolt.

“Happily,” he thought, “that beauty, like the soft perfume of an expiring rose, is too fine to attract the gross sense of men rioting amongst excess of sweets. Even I should have passed it by, had not compassion led me to penetrate the veil of misery which concealed it: and perhaps, after all, it is nothing but the loveliness of expression!”

The more he reflected upon her evident wish for utter concealment, from the disguise of staining her hair, and her avowed resolution of never declaring her Italian connections, the more it perplexed him. He attempted a variety of solutions of this mystery, but not one satisfied him; and only conscious of a most ardent wish to serve one so helpless and so deserted, he sought every opportunity of finding her once more alone.

While seeking this, he came more frequently into the grounds of Lydia; and being therefore oftener among the slaves, he heard but the more of Zeila.



They could only tell him, that she was purchased by their mistress, out of a Turkish corsair, three years before, with a few other slaves, who were now dead, or sold to a different owner.

All her present companions in misery described Zeila as kind and succouring to each ; repeating, how often she had abridged her own hours of rest and sleep to attend a sick fellow-sufferer ; and how often she had worked till absolutely deprived of every bodily power, for the sake of relieving some more infirm or very aged slave from an oppressive task.

“ We think she lives upon her tears,” said one of these persons ; “ for she is always weeping when alone ; and though she often seems fainting and famishing long before sun-set, when our supper comes, she just tastes her scanty portion, and leaves it for some one else.”

No one could remember that they had ever heard her mention the name of her family, or the place she came from ;

so that Cesario got no further satisfaction than a clearer view of her misery.

So cheaply purchased, and so little esteemed by her mistress, he thought her freedom would be procured at a rate quite within the limits of his own means; and anxious therefore to know how he could dispose of her after her purchase; anxious to have his deep interest in her justified by her candid confidence, he redoubled his efforts to find her alone for a few moments.

But Zeila avoided him again more studiously than before; and Cesario, dispirited by continued disappointment, was often tempted to give the whole matter up.

Sometimes he felt unaccountably chafed and mortified; and then he would reprobate himself for wasting so much of his thoughts upon one so strangely perverse. "I have no interest in serving her," he would say to himself, "I want only to get her out of this destroying

situation — to save her life in short ; and after that, I should most likely never see her again. But she opposes herself to this common Christian feeling, as if she fancied it, I know not what, — and hated me — and I am wrong, therefore, to let her occupy my thoughts, when I should think of nothing but my Giovanni.”

Cesario was in no danger now, of mistaking gratified vanity for love.

## CHAPTER XI.

AFTER having made this compact with himself, Cesario absented himself from his neighbour's grounds for many days ; and though he saw Zeila as usual come for water to the fountain, he went on with his mechanical employment without offering to go and assist her.

If after just glancing at her unsteady steps, he found her image still before his mind's eye, he steadily drove it away, and rivetted his thoughts upon his friend.

What new interest, indeed, could do more than detach him at intervals from this paramount concern ?

The progress of Mustapha seemed drawn out to intolerable length : he was heard of in Epirus, slowly approaching

the coast ; but how accompanied, none could actually learn, till after his settlement at Santa Maura.

The days, the hours, the minutes, seemed in Cesario's apprehension to grow in their duration : his pulses were always beating with a feverish tumult, occasioned by increasing anxiety : expectation ever excited, never gratified, and always agitated by fear, consumed his strength so rapidly, that he began to dread lest it should entirely fail him before he got within reach of Giovanni. At that time, the perfect command both of his mind and body might be essential to his enterprise.

Reuben, the kind but cautious Reuben, did not act with the rapidity Cesario asked : he was so very guarded in all his enquiries, so slow in his advances to whatever object he sought to reach, and must reach through hazard, that Cesario sometimes accused him of imbecile fear.

Cesario was, in short, restless and disturbed, — secretly at war with himself for caring about any thing unconnected with Giovanni ; and even now and then he determined to go alone to Santa Maura, and learn surer intelligence. He thought, also, that he should be happier if removed from the mixed grief and vexation of observing Zeila's misery, since she shunned his sympathy : he thought he needed no new suffering, added to what tortured him on the score of his friend.

So determined did he believe himself, to exclude this minor source of pain from his harassed thoughts, that one day as he saw her advancing to the fountain with another woman, though he was then drinking at it, he withdrew precipitately, without assisting, or even addressing her.

Restless and uneasy after this petulant action, and quarrelling with himself for yielding to such a humour, merely

because his benevolent intentions were crossed a little, he could neither eat nor sleep. He was ashamed of so savage a proof of anger at conduct, from which he had no right to draw hasty conclusions. Zeila might have as powerful and as honourable reasons for the concealment of her name and character, as he had; why, then, should he resent her seeming mystery?

Was he to be so easily checked in a benevolent purpose? Would Giovanni have allowed himself to be so affected?—No! If he had done so in times long past, where would have been their after bond of soul?

Cesario blushed at his own impatience, and resumed his visits to the gardens of Lydia.

Not long after, he encountered Zeila by chance.

A perturbed night, and the balmy breathings of a peculiarly sweet morning, had invited him out. He wandered from

the confined precincts of the valley into the open olive-grounds of Lydia, and, throwing himself under the shade of one of the trees, yielded himself up to thought.

Though his eyes were fixed upon the snowy tops of the distant mountains in the Morea, his sense took no note of them, for the images of former happiness and former suffering were passing before him.

He thought of his father and of his friend, of Toledo and Camilla, till his heart melted with more than melancholy. Often and deeply did he sigh, while he lay shading his closed eyelids from the increasing light of the risen sun; a sigh heavier than his own, made him start and look up.

He saw Eila momentarily supporting herself against a tree, with her melancholy but lovely eyes fixed upon him. She was even thinner and paler than before, and seemed to have scarcely



strength enough to prevent herself from sinking upon the earth.

What penetrating sweetness was in her soft regards! — what a celestial colour suddenly shot across her cheek! Cesario sprang from his recumbent posture, and advanced to meet her. He knew not what he meant nor what he did; his senses were all confusion until he found that he had locked her trembling hands in both his, and murmured he knew not what, of kind reproach, and far kinder greeting.

“I thought you meant that we should never meet again!” he exclaimed.

“I have been ill; I am—I am still ill,” was her faltering answer, as she extricated herself from the ardent pressure of his hands.

Cesario gazed on her emotion with an increasing pleasure, of the extent of which he was unconscious. “You have been ill; and we might, indeed, never have seen each other again! Zeila, does my interest in your fate displease you?—

will you not allow me to serve you if I can? I cannot bear to see you thus wearing out life in slavery: I think I could gladly lay down my life ——” He stopt, embarrassed, agitated, troubled, self-betrayed.

If Zeila had been indifferent to him, she could not have mistaken the sentiment of which, as yet, Cesario himself was not quite sensible, but which spoke distinctly in his tremulous lips and voice. Her overwhelmed eyes sunk under the expression of his; but, quickly awakening from that dream of an instant, she averted her face, and moved a few steps from him.

During the silence which followed, Cesario was discovering with consternation the real nature of his interest in her; and Zeila was heroically resolving upon the probable sacrifice of that interest, in justice to him, and severe retribution of her own errors.

“At this early hour,” she said, “we

are not likely to be interrupted: it is my hour for peacefully breathing the reviving breath of these balmy shrubs. You pity me—you think me more worthy of that pity than I am in fact. I would give much to preserve—to deserve that pity and esteem; but I will not steal them.”

A sigh burst out with the last words, and she looked down.

Cesario's heart stopped in his breast: it throbbed again with the alarming question, “Could she be conscious of not deserving pity!” But mastering his extreme emotion, he retook her hand, and said in an earnest voice, “If you trust me at all, be entirely sincere with me! In the name of our blessed Redeemer, I ask it.”

Cesario was not conscious of the last adjuration; and he did not therefore understand the delightful surprise which illuminated Zeila's face at this discovery of his Christian faith: without noticing

it to him, she returned her dewy eyes downwards, and began.

“ I must not tell you the name of my family, for I have justly forfeited their affection, and they have been, perhaps, but rigidly just to me. My sad history is short, for my life has not been long : I have not lived nineteen years ; and yet I feel as if an age had passed since my first days of childish rashness !

“ My mother died during my infancy ; my father did not conciliate my affection ; and I had but a brother several years older than myself,—but a brother so dear, so amiable, so incomparable !—O can he have forgotten me ?—can *he* never have forgiven me ?”

“ And where is this brother ?” asked Cesario, tremulously.

“ Alas, I know not !—perhaps no longer in the world,” replied Zeila, her eyes surcharged with tears. “ He became one of a military order ; and then he was almost entirely removed from me.”

“Of a military order!” repeated Cesario; “was he ——” He stopped, and eagerly running over her whole person with his eyes, turned them hastily away again, bidding her in scarcely articulate words proceed.

“It was my father’s will that I should marry,” resumed the faltering Zeila, “and he chose for my husband a man more revolting in person, manners, and acknowledged character, than any description can realise. I was but fourteen then, and beloved by a young man charming enough by nature and education to win a more experienced heart than mine. Yet I fancied I only yielded to his pleadings from mingled pity for him, and abhorrence of my intended bridegroom. My dread of my father’s wrath was childishly great; my lover’s persuasions were incessant; alarm, pity, gratitude, ignorance of myself and others, all assailed me. I had no female friend or relation to advise me; my brother was

away, and time pressing. In an evil hour I fled with my lover, and became his wife."

As Zeila covered her burning and tearful face with her hands, Cesario unconsciously covered his. The agitating imagination which had struck him at first, seemed now almost confirmed; and a confused expression of horror at the conviction of her belonging to another, and of joy at her probable relationship to Giovanni, locked up his power of speech. At last, fixing his mournful eyes upon her violently-trembling figure, he said in a suppressed voice, "You are married, then?"

A frightful stillness had succeeded to that tumult of hopes and fears and undefined wishes with which he had listened to the first part of Zeila's narrative; and he now drew involuntarily back.

Zeila removed her hands, and looked on him with eyes in which her whole distracted soul was painted,— "Oh, you

are right !” she exclaimed wildly : “ shrink from the wretch who dare plead any extenuation for an act of rebellion against a parent ; against the just restraints of her sex ! I was culpable ; I confess it, I deplore it daily at the foot of the Cross. I weep my fault through every solitary hour. Heaven did not let me go unpunished : my father would never see me again ; my husband would not permit me to seek the mediation of my distant brother ; and the character of that husband gradually withered all my hopes in life.

“ I have suffered much, kind stranger,” she added, her brow contracting, and her cheek turning icy gray. “ Think you that five years, divided between blighted expectations and bitter sufferings, with repentant penances all that time, may blot out the transgression of fourteen ?”

Cesario was pierced with a variety of feelings. Her deep contrition, her pre-

sent situation, the increasing conviction that she was the long-lost sister of Giovanni; and the idea that, but for her imprudent marriage he might have become connected with that precious friend by the nearest ties; the certainty that she could now never be his; all these feelings warred in his breast and on his countenance. He sighed repeatedly, between every sigh murmuring some inarticulate expressions of a consoling kind.

Zeila's beautiful features took a sadder expression. "Alas, all other assurances are vain:—if my brother deems my fault unpardonable, it is so: and could he have forgiven me, would he have suffered me to languish in this wretched condition?"

Cesario was about to utter some hasty exclamation that would at once have declared his knowledge of Zeila's family; but checking himself, he enquired in a hurried voice, how her brother knew of



her situation, and by what means she had fallen into it?

“ My husband had an unsteady temper,” she replied, keeping her humbled eyes fixed upon the ground, and replying to Cesario’s last question : “ so, instead of embarking for France at the usual sea-port of the Italian State we were in, he chose, two years after our marriage, to journey along the coast ; there we were surprised, one luckless night, by a descent of Turkish pirates, and carried off with all the young and healthy of the village where we were sleeping. O that night of horror ! O the days and nights of yet greater horror which followed it ! — On the deck of the corsair, even after we were taken, my poor husband made fierce resistance——and——” Zeila stopt, pale, tearless, shaking in every limb.

Cesario was unconscious of the vague expectation (for it must not be called hope) which now convulsed his heart,

but he drew closer to her : Zeila, perhaps, read the anxious meaning of his fixed look, for making a strong effort to conclude, she gasped out, “ I saw him cut down at my feet ! ”

Had not Cesario mastered himself, and drawn hastily back, he must have clasped her to his breast in the transport of that moment : happily he had acquired the habit of commanding his sudden impulses, and he now only turned on her a look of fondest compassion, — “ And thou, Zeila, — so young, so lovely, — left defenceless in such hands — what became of thee ? ”

A blush, which restored its earliest beauty to the face he fixed that gaze on, prefaced the reply of Zeila : that blush belonged to the feelings his tender look had awakened ; those she had to describe, were such as blanch the cheek and ice the heart.

“ They *did* talk to me of my beauty ! ” she replied ; “ and it threatened me with too many horrors for me to doubt it then :

— Alas, we doubt only what is to make us happy! (She sighed deeply as she spoke.) Can you not guess what fate I dreaded?—what fate the pirates assured me I should find at Constantinople?— They called it a distinction — A distinction! — Blessed Virgin!”

Her shudder went to the soul of Cesario: he looked at her again, and fancied he saw in the expression of that thrilling countenance the very spirit of Giovanni.

Zeila resumed in a low and embarrassed voice:—“ The agonies of my mind soon brought on agonies of body, which happily caused the death of the infant to which I had once looked for all my happiness on earth. I could not wish that my child should live a slave — an impious Mahometan perhaps! — O no — I blest the awful Hand that withdrew its unspotted soul! I recovered life; but I was determined never to recover what was to doom me — O let me not think of what I might have sunk to! — Continued ill-

ness, and the resolution of merely supporting existence, not nourishing myself into strength and health, changed me entirely: I was seen, and scorned at Constantinople; and brought hither with the refuse of the prize, to become the property of my present mistress. O blessed loss of what I never greatly prized!—These hollow, faded cheeks, these wasted limbs, have preserved my soul from worse than death. I shall at least die, Giovanni, without having become the thing you would shrink from!”

“Giovanni!” echoed Cesario, in a tone which Amadea (for it was she) could not comprehend, but which went to her inmost soul; and he sank at her feet overpowered by joy.

Amadea raised him with a bewildered air. “What means this extreme emotion?” she asked; “you repeat the name which has escaped me: it is my brother’s. Ask me not to complete it with that of our family.”

“ I will ask you nothing — wish nothing more !” repeated Cesario, in a delirium of fast-kindling love and hope and admiration ; “ I now comprehend all your mysteries — that discoloured hair and skin — that severe abstinence — that incessant toil — that studious exposure to the disfiguring effects of heat and cold ; — all these have but one object — to preserve the spirit spotless, though at the expense of its beauteous temple ! — And thou hast shunned me, Amadea —”

“ Amadea !” shrieked his amazed companion, catching his arm with both her hands, and eagerly looking in his face with a preposterous expectation — “ O no ! — no ! — his eyes were heavenly blue !” — She sank back upon the bank in an agony of disappointment.

Cesario could no longer master his impetuous feelings. “ It is not Giovanni that you see before you,” he exclaimed, throwing himself again at her feet, and seizing her hand which he covered with kisses ; “ but it is his friend — the friend

who will redeem you both, or perish himself."

The last expression was caught by Amadea, whose ardent enquiry extorted a confirmation of the fear it excited: so that with the joy of knowing her brother lived, and had fondly sought her; and that the only being she could cling to for life was his friend, came the over-poising knowledge of his captivity: Perhaps mercifully came; for how else could Amadea have borne the shock of so much happiness?

At the information of her father's death she wept bitterly, for Cesario could not tell her she had been forgiven; but the certainty that Giovanni had never received the only account she had ever been able to send him of her situation, consoled and encouraged her. She had written to her brother by a released Christian, who had promised faithfully to transmit her letter to him at Malta; but whether his absence from that island, or the forgetfulness of the bearer, had been

to blame, Cesario knew not; he could only assure Amadea that no information of her existence had ever reached her relations.

The loud bell which called the slaves of Lydia from their beds, now began to ring; Amadea started with habitual fear. "We must part," she cried.

"Part," repeated Cesario, "and I have so much to say to you!—Where can we meet again at this hour, at any hour? You have shown me *your* heart, Amadea, and I would make you a confession of mine: I, too, would not *steal* esteem and confidence; and though your brother has pardoned and restored me to his friendship, his dearer sister perhaps——"

Cesario stopt confused, faltering. The eyes of Amadea met his at that moment: all her joyfully surprised heart was in them; that heart which had really never loved before, but which dreaded the sentiment, yet felt at this instant its fullest power.

Cesario dared not reply to those speaking eyes : he averted his kindling face, and giving her hand a fluttering pressure, repeated his enquiry of where and when she would meet him the next day ?

“ At this hour, in this place,” she whispered, and withdrawing her hand, they severally and hastily retreated.

Cesario retired from her into the solitude of his own apartment in Reuben’s house ; there he endeavoured to calm the turbulent yet delightful agitation of his mind.

What a view of Paradise was opened to him ? Dare he hope to enter there ?— or were those radiant gates to close and shut him out for ever ? The bare possibility of being instrumental to the release both of Giovanni and of Amadea, and the dearer hope of attaching her to his fate by the most sacred bonds, was positive happiness to him. He knew not that he could bear greater happiness at that moment.



His thoughts rapidly took in the full extent of the blessings now promised him, as well as the retrospect of the awful events, by which he had been led to this bright point. The impression such reflections made on him was ineffaceable.

It seemed the very hand of Providence leading him to the summit of earthly desires; and as such he would not allow himself to question the events of the future. Of Amadea's surprised feelings he could not retain a rational doubt; for when she heard from his own lips the assurance of his being, what she in some degree suspected, far other than he seemed, her heart had escaped its bonds, love, gratitude, and rapture lightning from her eyes. Cesario's beating heart had responded to those thrilling eyes; and now, while in idea he met their beam again, he felt the dear conviction that when he dare seek her love, he would not fear to sue in vain.

But where were now his soberer visions of peace and friendship only? Not three months since, he had believed it impossible for anything to turn him back to the world from Giovanni and the Order of St. John.

Cesario would have blushed at his own instability, had he not found a ready, and perhaps sufficient excuse, in the circumstances under which he had first known Amadea, and in his subsequent discovery of her relationship to Giovanni. By winning her affections, and eventually making her his wife, he was fulfilling the earliest, though at that time fruitless, wishes of her brother; and though the vows of his Order must still attach Giovanni to its self-denying laws, Cesario could imagine several allowable means by which the society of that inestimable friend might be nearly always secured to him.

Cesario saw nothing at this moment but the future arrayed in smiles. His mind, indeed, was in such pleasurable

disorder, that it was long before his views for Amadea could assume a fixed shape.

At last he came to the resolution of partially confiding this new secret to Reuben ; confessing that he had found in Zeila, one whose relatives he knew in Italy, and for the sake of whom he wished to obtain her freedom. A small sum (and with a great one, for another emergency, he was secretly provided by La Valette,) would most likely purchase her from her present owner, as if to share the household duties of Tamar ; after which they must seize some opportunity of transmitting her to Italy.

The attachment of Tamar's children to Amadea, would afford Reuben a plausible pretext for selecting her as an assistant to his daughter ; and his increasing success in the retail of his trade would prevent any surprise at his attempting so slight a purchase.

Whatever might be the event of Cesario's attempt to liberate Giovanni, he yet hoped that Amadea would owe her recovery of life's best blessing to him. But, though he felt, that not even Amadea could reconcile him to life, if her brother were lost to them, he could not forbear acknowledging, that if, after the recital of his infatuated bondage to Beatrice, and the confession of his struggling fortunes, she seemed undismayed at the prospect of trusting her happiness to him, he should be unable to wait for Giovanni's permission to secure the promise of her affection.

Perhaps Cesario felt at this instant how completely Providence had humbled his once proud spirit. He must receive from Giovanni, not only forgiveness, but the chief blessing of his life ! — from Giovanni, whom he had first spurned, and then insulted ! — and he was now obliged to seek the freedom of that injured friend, not by the honourable paths of open

danger, but by the galling means of sordid society and ignoble artifice !

“ Ah well ! I have deserved it all — more than all ! ” he said to himself ; “ and if a merciful Providence grants me his liberty, by any mode which is not really degrading, I shall have escaped unpunished.”

Amadea, meanwhile, felt as though she were awaked in a new world. Even hope had been so long banished from her thoughts, that any thing like happiness was admitted with astonishment. She had believed herself an outcast from home and from Heaven : and her own disciplined mind had so severely condemned her only fault, and never-sleeping reflection had so distinctly marked every moment of her slavery since, that time seemed lengthened by it. Thus, in the spring of life, she felt as if she were reaching the term of existence, and all earthly prospects closing : now, she was wafted back to the starting point of

youth and hope, with love and felicity for her goal !

Could it be possible ! (she thought). Was she, who had resigned herself with penitent submission to withered affections and a suffering life, to become, after all, the centre of domestic love, bestowing as much happiness as she received ? Was she ever to look round on beauteous creation, and feel that it made a part of that soul's enjoyments, which for three long years had considered its joyous charms as mockery ? Was she ever to be reinstated in her own respect, by knowing herself beloved and respected by the most estimable amongst mankind ? Was she, in short, to bless the severe dispensation which had disciplined her into a perfect knowledge of the value of all those blessings, which, long withheld, were eventually to be bestowed upon her ?

Amadea, the long-suffering, self-condemning Amadea, dared not believe it.

Oh, how incredulous are they of happiness, who have known only sorrow! Suffering seems to them the natural order of things; and every thing delightful, but passing phenomena.

When Cesario's purely humane attentions to her had shed its first balmy drop upon Amadea's heart, she thought but of gratitude; eagerly admitting the long-estranged feeling of a kindly glow for her species: but no sooner had his generous contempt of his own life at the period of the fire, kindled a livelier admiration in her, and their subsequent intercourse taught her to suspect the nature of this feeling, than, starting at herself, she fled from all indulgence of so dangerous a sentiment.

Love would have been interdicted to her by her own severe self-judgment, even amid scenes of peace and equality; how much more so, therefore, in her present degraded state, and when its object was in a rank so far below hers!

The offending sister of Giovanni Cigala, she thought, even as a slave, ought not to debase her family further, by bestowing herself upon a low-born servant, in recompense for her liberty: and though the thought, that he was other than he seemed, often stole across her mind, she resolutely dismissed it; still determining to expiate her weakness in times long past, by her self-conquest now.

Yet how true it is, that

“ They who would stay the tide with sand,  
And fetter fire with flaxen band,  
Have yet a harder task to prove,—  
By strong resolve, to conquer love !”

Amadea's solitary heart had silently and imperceptibly kindled into an unquenchable flame by repeated glows of virtuous admiration: Cesario's singularly beautiful person might have passed her unnoticed; nay, his peculiar assiduity about herself might only have excited



gratitude; but his active benevolence to others was not to be contemplated with moderate emotion : that, seized her soul with sweet surprise ; opening to her an unsuspected source of pleasure, in the observation of its exercise, and the contemplation of its effects.

Dangerous, dangerous pleasure ! less dreaded, yet far more destructive than all the reveries of which outward graces only, or proofs of preference, are the objects ! What it seems virtue to love, prudence can scarcely withhold us from loving : and as Amadea observed or listened to the numberless proofs of Cesario's gracious and succouring spirit to all within its influence, she felt that nothing could ennoble him more in her eyes ; though the duty she owed her family, even while deserting her, or unconscious of her protracted existence, her apprehensive mind believed must ever place a bar between their fates.

This just conviction of the obligation

imposed on her by disparity of birth, might not, perhaps, have been able to stand against the continued influence of manners which made that disparity be forgotten, united to obvious assiduities or persuasive pleadings, had Cesario pursued either mode of winning her: but Cesario's sensibility was so alive to the slightest repulse, and so abhorrent of persecuting the thing he loved, that he unconsciously armed her with weapons to resist her own heart.

When she saw, that he shunned her in his turn, that delicate apprehensiveness which distinguishes the love of woman, made Amadea start at the possibility of her having mistaken pity for a tenderer interest: it is for man to pursue and win; woman relinquishes and recedes. Thus, when Amadea loved Cesario best, she shunned him most. But Cesario guessed it not; and when her laudable combat with an alarming feeling made her assume an air of coldness, he

was far from imagining how many wounds his proud neglect inflicted on her already bleeding heart.

Overlooking the surer guide of comparing her conduct with his own, and thence guessing at the motive which dictated its seeming caprice, Cesario had at first looked for such proofs of attachment as he had formerly received from Beatrice; and not finding these, he fancied himself disregarded; but as other agitating feelings threw Amadea's heart into disorder, and the joy of that tender heart at the discovery of his real character escaped from her eyes, so perfect and so delightful was the conviction it brought, of all that he then was to her, and all that he might yet be of dearer and more esteemed, that he felt he had never before known the prospect of perfect happiness.

## CHAPTER XII.

CESARIO and Amadea met the next morning, with that strange embarrassment which is inseparable from strong attachment : the former hastened to conquer it, by immediately commencing the history of his friendship with Giovanni.

While Amadea listened to this interesting history, she yielded herself up to the dear consciousness of sympathy with Cesario : her tender remembrance of Giovanni when she was only a child, was exalted by admiration and gratitude for his goodness to the man she now identified with herself. Delicious tears rained from her eyes ; while those rivetted eyes, unable to avert themselves from the face of him who partook in all her feelings, seemed at

once to ask and to promise every thing which respectful love could desire.

Amadea's crimsoned cheek reflected the raised colour of Cesario's, when he hurried over the torturing avowal of his passion for Beatrice Brignoletti, and the madness into which it had transported him : her heart throbbed intolerably : it was not jealousy which made it beat ; she did Cesario justice, and believed him incapable of retaining one lingering feeling for a creature so unworthy. She only grieved that his noble heart should ever have been the sport of such an inconstant ; and in proportion to her pity for him, was her indignant contempt of the woman who had severed such holy friendship as that between him and Giovanni.

It was impossible for Cesario to go over the details of this infatuation, and describe the revolution of feeling which so quickly followed, without endeavouring to convince Amadea and himself, that he had indeed been under the influence of a

spell. He wished to believe that he had never truly loved till he knew her ; and this belief, at first insinuated, was at last told by him with ingenuous earnestness.

He followed up this involuntary declaration by a hasty sketch of his views for her transfer from Lydia ; and, in case she should bless his wishes, of his plan for her removal to Malta ; there to await his arrival with Giovanni, of whose escape he would not allow her or himself to entertain a single doubt.

What became of Amadea at this moment ? So long miserable ! — so long as if abandoned by Heaven and earth ! — so wildly-doubtful of what she wished ! — so transported with the sudden view of all which this affection offered her — her liberty, her country, her brother ! — How was she to master so many struggling feelings ?

Was it a violation of woman's best character, that, instead of a faint and regulated approval, she cast upon Cesario

agance full of her consenting, transported soul, and sank insensible into his arms?

Cesario indulged himself for an instant in gazing upon those perfect features, which only too much happiness had fixed in temporary insensibility : his eye glanced, and withdrew directly from that alabaster throat, which, in his eager attempts at freeing her respiration, he had partially uncovered ; and his imagination could not but paint her such as he hoped one day to see her, when no longer obliged to stain that snowy skin and sunny hair which proved her-kindred to Giovanni.

While he gazed on her, he imagined that slender form rounded by health and happiness, those touching and tearful eyes smiling with security of every dear possession ; and though the image his fancy presented was bright and fair, he could not help pressing her now-different form against his breast, fondly exclaiming, “ Yet it will not be *this* Amadea !”

Cesario knew not, that a heart truly attached, accommodates itself to every personal change in its object: let the eyes we love, ever express the same tenderness and the same qualities as when they first charmed us; and, whether they brighten or grow dim, we shall still joy to meet them, still think them unchanged!

A short time restored Amadea to herself, and then her grateful tenderness showed itself in blushes and tears.

Cesario's plans for her and for Giovanni were more amply discussed; when it was settled that he should immediately set about negotiating her purchase.

When he mentioned the necessity of her subsequent removal to a place beyond reach of Turkish power, he observed her countenance change; but she opposed no resistance: reason was convinced, though her heart trembled. Might she have gone where Cesario went, she would have found herself beyond danger; but to encounter the



perils of the sea alone, to incur the possibility of being again captured!—the idea was alarming; but as there was no alternative, and as Giovanni's escape made up half her dearest hopes, she stifled the expression of her reluctance.

They parted at the morning bell.

After this interview, Cesario's measures were prompt. Reuben made the application to Lydia, prefacing his subject by remarks upon the increasing fatigues of his daughter, and the consequent necessity of her being supplied with an assistant.

He thanked Heaven that his own industry was so far blessed, that he might now afford this help to Tamar; and therefore as Zeila had acquired some power over his volatile grand-children by her occasional caresses; and, as she could not be very valuable to her mistress, he wished to know whether her price would be within his poor ability.

Lydia did not rate Zeila as low as Reuben expected; and with habitual parsimony refusing to give what she demanded, he broke off the negociation.

Cesario's anguish and disappointment, when he heard this, almost hurried him into an imprudence which might have proved fatal to his hopes, by awakening some suspicion of Zeila's original condition, and the present power and will of her friends to bid high for her liberty. Reuben bowed under the passing storm; and when it was over, offered to repair his fault immediately.

Cesario took him at his word; and Reuben inwardly lamenting that so much good gold should be given for so good-for-little a slave, returned to Lydia, bargained with her awhile, and at last purchased Zeila.

When Cesario first beheld Amadea under the same roof with the placid and kind Tamar, even the presence of the

latter could hardly restrain him from uttering the grateful joy of his heart.

Amadea spoke to him only with her eyes; but how much did they say as she stood in the vine-trelliced porch of their little dwelling, surrounded by the children all clambering round her with boisterous fondness!

From that moment her health and spirits rapidly changed: Youth's heart and health are so elastic! The tasks Tamar required of her were few and light: to share her maternal cares, to attend their bees, and prepare the simple meals of Reuben and Cesario, were all her occupations.

Amadea performed these with delight: she loved children; and the humblest duty had a charm for her, when it was to administer to the refreshment of him for whose sake all things were welcome.

Often, as she gave and he received the honied cakes kneaded by her hand, their eyes would meet with the same

smile at their mutual and temporary degradation.

Thus, in daily and undisturbed intercourse, their hearts became more intimately known to each other. In the general character of tender and noble qualities, their mutual sympathy was already evident ; but it is only by hourly intercourse, by seeing each other at every careless instant, by catching a look, a word, a movement, when the mind is off its guard, and circumstances of small or great moment arise unforeseen, that we can discover the dearest, because the most minute of our sympathies.

Principles, feelings, tastes, all agreeing, Cesario and Amadea found only sufficient difference between them to mark their individuality ; for had Cesario been less impetuous, or Amadea less timid, they must have loved their absolute selves in each other.

Amadea dared not throw aside the disguise of her hair and skin ; but in spite

of this disguise her beauty was breaking like morning through the clouds. The kindling blushes of health and hope and joy irradiated even that stained complexion ; and her ivory arms, from which Cesario sometimes stole aside the thick foldings of their covering, were assuming the roundness and polish of their natural symmetry.

In that sweet serenity and fulness of happiness, with which her eyes now met his more agitated because more impassioned gaze, he fancied they resembled her brother's: their light was softer perhaps, for even Friendship has not so touching a look as Love!—but still they resembled Giovanni's in colour and in shape ; and the deep sadness which had once made them almost afflicting eyes, was gone ! — ah ! was it gone for ever ?

Cesario sometimes asked himself that question, when tortured by varying news from Santa Maura, and crossed by a sudden pang of apprehension. He was now almost the happiest of men : Giovan-

ni's release would make him completely so; then how dare he expect so matchless a destiny?

If present blessings were to be the warrant for expectation of bliss in the future, if interwoven hearts were to be so, why were the hearts of Camilla and Toledo broken? Why was their perfect happiness shattered by the awful bolt of Heaven?

Cesariodurst not dwell upon these dread imaginings; and, hastening to banish them by other images, one moment when they crossed him, he took up a volume of his native poet; his eye fell upon those beautiful lines, —

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“ For I have seen  
The thorn frown rudely all the winter long,  
And after bear the rose upon its top;  
And bark, that all her way across the sea  
Ran straight and speedy, perish at the last,  
E'en in the haven's mouth.”

Who is there, that, in an instant of extreme emotion, has not felt the influence

of superstition? Cesario shivered at the omen, and throwing away the book, went with a disturbed and boding soul to harder employments.

He had scarcely commenced them, when Reuben appeared: the latter beckoning him from his few associates, led him under the deep shade of an old chesnut-grove skirting the field of the fountain.

He had to inform Cesario, that the brother-in-law of Tamar, a hardy young man who carried on an illicit trade between the islands and Sicily, was then with his vessel in an obscure creek on the least-frequented shore of Zante. Reuben was certain this man would undertake, for a proper recompense, to convey Amadea to Malta itself.

Nicolai (so this person was called) resided in Maganesi, one of the petty islets off Santa Maura; and he had brought intelligence of the Basha's arrival there with a large suite.

Both these agitating communications being made at the same instant to Cesario, deprived him for a while of the power of thinking with necessary coolness.

A multitude of alarming images immediately presented themselves: Amadea taken from him—Amadea given into the power of a pirate and a smuggler—Amadea, now so likely to excite the avarice or worse passions of the very man to whom she was confided; dare he trust her with such a man?

Yet, if he lost this opportunity, he must leave her in Zante without better protection than Tamar's; since he and Reuben ought instantly to proceed to Santa Maura; and if her recovered beauty should strike the eye, or come to the ear of any Turkish tyrant, during their absence, Cesario knew there was no power that could preserve her.

What was he to do? He durst not make the voyage to Malta with her, see



her safely landed, and return again; for in that time (a period perhaps infinitely prolonged by the casualties of weather, or the necessary precautions of their desperate captain,) Giovanni might be lost. A captive's life or liberty often turns upon the event of an instant: it was therefore Cesario's duty to risk much, trust Amadea to Providence, and pursue his chief aim, the acquittal of his debt of gratitude and repentance to her brother.

So great was his outward agitation during this internal conflict, that Reuben could not fail of noticing it. "My son," he said in a cautious, but kind voice, "I see you have not quite trusted me, but I don't think the worse of you for it:—I would have you prudent; it is the only way to thrive. I see you love this young damsel; and are afraid of trusting her amongst a set of wild adventurers, as you fancy Nicolai and his crew; but in truth he is a good well-meaning fellow that

works hard for his wife and children, and will not harm a hair of Zeila's head; provided you give him something beforehand, and ensure him a tolerable reward when he lands her in Malta. I'll stake my life on his honest dealing with you."

"I cannot, will not, must not trust her in such hands!" exclaimed the imprudent Cesario, in an agony of indecision: he turned abruptly away, and took several hasty steps up and down the grove; then, suddenly coming up again to Reuben, he exclaimed, "Reuben, it is not above four—six days sail from this to Malta; the weather is not boisterous for the season—Is there any consideration that would tempt Tamar to go along with Zeila?"

Reuben was too much struck with this extraordinary proposal to reply instantly; but after a little consideration, (during which, it must be confessed, the prospect of a liberal reward from Zeila's friends

in Malta had its full weight,) he consented to discuss the subject.

It was then soon settled, that, provided Tamar would freely consent, she was to take her three children to give the thing a colour; and, as if going to visit her husband's family in Maganesi, was to embark with her brother-in-law, accompanied by her slave.

After landing Amadea, Nicolai was then to proceed with his sister-in-law to Maganesi, which circumstance would afford an additional reason for Reuben's intended traffic at Santa Maura: by that means, also, Cesario would be satisfied of Amadea's safety.

Many other advantages sprung out of this scheme: by dispatching Amadea direct to Malta, Cesario was enabled to concert measures with the Grand Master for facilitating the escape of Giovanni; since it was necessary for the success of his plan, that some light gallies of the Order should be scattered about the

Ionian Sea, within his reach from Santa Maura.

Undertaking to procure Tamar's consent to the proposed voyage, Reuben went in search of her; while Cesario hastened to impart their conversation to Amadea, and learn whether she would have the courage, now the moment of trial came, to trust herself to the mercy of winds and waves, and a band of unknown Greeks.

As Cesario suspected, Amadea trembled when the proposal was made to her: she feared the chances of a voyage taken with one of such desperate habits; and, believing Giovanni at Santa Maura, her heart yearned to go where he was. For some time her extreme agitation mocked all effort to control or conceal it: she wept violently on the supporting arm of Cesario, whose manly frame trembled with tender sympathy, and whose faltering voice but ill seconded the arguments for

hope and resolution, which he tried to urge on her.

At length, rousing herself, she said, with a rainbow smile, "I should love thee little, my Cesario, if these tears did not witness how much I suffer in parting from thee ; but I have no fears for myself—at least will not have—if Tamar will go with me. O no, no," she added, more vehemently clasping her hands together, "what shall I think of, for whom shall I fear, except for thee and our Giovanni?"

"*Our* Giovanni!" repeated Cesario, in an exstasy at all that little pronoun implied.

Amadea faintly extricated herself from his embrace. "When we meet again," she said, alluding to their reunion in Malta, "all this will be over-paid;"—and, averting her fresh-streaming eyes, she retired from him to give complete way to her feelings ; and then to acquire

dominion over them for the future more trying hour.

Tamar's consent was easily gained : she had no fear of the sea, and with amiable pride she wished to show her children to the venerable parents of her husband ; besides which she loved the gentle Zeila ; and the liberal reward, of which her father assured her, stimulated her for her family's sake to encounter personal inconvenience.

The preparations of the different persons were soon made ; so that by the next morning's dawn, Nicolai's little bark, freighted with half Cesario's soul, shot from under the steep cliffs of Monte Skopo upon her eventful errand.

How long did Cesario, on that rocky height, watch with straining eyes the lateen sail and umbered keel of that little vessel, as it cut the sparkling waves and bowed before the freshening wind !

When its winged and slender figure vanished behind a promontory, he was

seized with such a fearful presentiment, that he would have given his life to have recalled Amadea; but the wish was vain, and the presentiment only fancy; and resolutely discarding such weakness, he threw himself prostrate on the solitary cliff, and there implored for her the protection of Heaven, and besought the same divine blessing upon his own meditated enterprise.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE agitation and hurry of the ensuing days gave a fortunate interruption to Cesario's fearful thoughts about Amadea: Reuben's little vessel was launched and freighted; and licensed by the Turkish commandant, upon condition of paying him one-third of the profits.

Reuben's avowed object was Santa Maura; where the arrival of its magnificent governor, with a large suite of officers and women, made it a sure market for the Indian and European rarities which he confessed to have collected.

With this plausible pretext, he took leave of his friends in Zante, consigning his house and few remaining stores to the care of a relation.



Embarking with Cesario, whose impatient wishes the lagging wind would not second, they set sail for the island to which Sappho's death has given such sad celebrity.

The navigation of the islands, and the dulness of the winds, made them very soon entirely dependent upon their oars; so that it was the middle of the third day when they came in sight of the high chalky shores of Santa Maura.

The less inviting rocks of Ithaca, which they were then leaving behind, detained Cesario's thoughts a moment from the object of his greatest solicitude: he seemed to hear the sacred lyre of Homer sounding in the still morning air, matching with its lofty strains the glorious effects of the rising sun and the kindling heavens. But the stream bore them on; Ithaca receded; and four hours afterwards, Reuben's vessel was moored in the road of Santa Maura.

Cesario had experienced many agitat-

ing moments during his life, but he remembered none that exceeded the one in which he landed on that shore. Never before had he such a stake to throw for! A re-union with Giovanni was the only thing now wanting to make him the most favoured of mortals.

He followed the steps of Reuben in silence ; who, as he led him towards the busiest quarter of the town of Santa Maura, pointed out, by significant looks, unaccompanied by words, the splendid seraglio or palace of the Basha.

Its magnificent accompaniments of mosque and kiosk were mixed with the verdure of the cypress and the cedar ; and the sound of music and laughter came from its extensive gardens. Marbles, porphyries, and gildings glittered over the long-extending front of the palace itself ; but the sight had no beauty in Cesario's eyes, for it was the prison of his friend.

At the bazar Reuben encountered a subordinate Turk whom he had known

in the service of Mustapha, when they were in the Ottoman camp on Mount Sceberras.

Seizing the happy chance, or rather providence of this encounter, he saluted Yusuf very humbly; and immediately entering upon his long-practised romance, of the severity and avarice of the Christians in his own case, obtained both hearing and credence.

Cesario, who well knew his adroit companion's mode of reaching any point he aimed at, was prepared for what followed, the instant this harangue began; and consequently watched its progress with seeming indifference, but real anxiety.

Reuben gave Yusuf's pithy description of his flight from Malta great attention; seasoning it with many gratifying exclamations, at all he had gone through during the siege; (for human nature seems to love superiority, even in suffering;) and having, by this means, secured Yusuf's favour, he ventured to state his

present view in touching at Santa Maura; which, he said, was to dispose of some exceeding choice merchandise, with the profits of which he meant to purchase other goods to complete the freight of his vessel for the neutral port of Trieste.

If Yusuf had interest, therefore, to recommend him to any officer about the Basha's own person, so that his rarities might be shown in the seraglio, perhaps His Excellency might purchase them for the ladies of his haram; and in that case, Reuben's gratitude would not fail to testify itself in a substantial form to his assisting friend.

Yusuf swallowed the bait immediately; and, promising to speak to the Basha's hookha-bearer, whom he represented as one high in favour from an extraordinary power of amusing his master, he instructed Reuben in what quarter of the seraglio to enquire for him on the morrow, and took his leave.

Cesario saw him depart with inexpress-

sible disappointment; having in vain waited to hear the name of Giovanni introduced: he now reproached Reuben with this culpable omission. Reuben defended himself well: he represented the necessity of extreme caution; urging, that had he made his entreaties to be admitted with his goods into the palace, after having enquired about the prisoner of whose liberty Mustapha was so jealous, suspicion might have been excited.

“ If I hear the details we want to-morrow by chance,” he said, “ it will be still better; but if I do not, I will wind round my questions about twenty different persons, till I come, as if naturally, to enquire what became of the Christian knight after the death of Morad Rais.”

Cesario yielded, with an ill grace, to the necessity of this caution. He fancied that when once he should know that Giovanni lived, and was indeed in Santa

Maura, his spirit would regain calmness and strength for every future difficulty.

He forgot how much more anxiety that circumstance must excite in him, by immediately opening to him a thousand new cares, for the success of the different stages of whatever plan he might adopt for his friend's release.

Reuben deemed it politic to remove Cesario as much as possible from observation, lest his occasional fits of forgetfulness, by altering his demeanour, (as they had often done at Zante,) should excite notice, and stimulate enquiry. He therefore advised him to remain principally on board their vessel, as if in charge of the cargo; and to come only occasionally into the town, there to be instructed in its few details, — an acquaintance with the topography of the town, and indeed of the country round it, being absolutely requisite, in case any subsequent emergency should require such knowledge from Cesario.

As he threw his eyes across the fordable slip of sea, which merely cuts the island off the main land; and thence glanced at the deep woods and mountainous ranges behind, he imagined, for an instant, himself and Giovanni fording that narrow strait, and vanishing from pursuit amongst those pathless recesses. "O that it were come to that!" throbbed his busy heart; and he turned away, to pursue his observation of other means.

Having accompanied his agitated companion in the circuit of the city, and secured to himself a lodging on shore, for the greater facility of selling his goods and making purchases, Reuben saw Cesario into the boat, which was to reconduct him to the ship, faithfully promising to bring him some satisfactory intelligence upon the morrow.

The perturbed night which intervened between this period and that morrow was spent by Cesario in restless action. He walked the deck that whole night,

alternately thinking of Amadea and of Giovanni.

So lately all confidence, he was now all apprehension, — a tender heart is so variable in its hopes and fears! Every blast which rushed down from the steep shores, and swept the dark stretch of ocean, shook his heart also: on those viewless wings the fate of Amadea might be passing over him! Then he turned his eyes towards that part of the island, where stood the seraglio of the Basha; and tracing, or fancying he traced, its irregular outline above the shore, he said to himself, — “I fancy Giovanni is there; and, perhaps, he lies mouldering in some Turkish grave!”

The idea was immediately followed by a train of desponding thoughts, which insensibly crowded on him one by one, till hope was excluded.

Reuben found him in the middle of the ensuing day, with all the marks of this wretched night upon his coun-



tenance. The old man conversed awhile with seeming earnestness amongst the few mariners he found on the deck where Cesario was still walking ; then slowly descending to the cabin, left the latter to divine that he might follow.

Cesario was not an instant of doing so,

When Reuben saw him enter, and advance impatiently, he stepped behind him and closed the door. “ Be at peace, my son !” he whispered ; “ your friend is alive.” — “ And here !” cried Cesario, “ Yes, here, — in the Basha’s palace.”

Cesario fell upon the old man’s neck : when after some instant’s indulgence of his impetuous joy, he arose again, he saw tears on Reuben’s cheek : his gratitude for this sympathy was as energetic in its expression as his transport ; but, hastily interrupting himself, he demanded the particulars of Giovanni’s situation.

Reuben’s information had been gathered, partly by chance, and partly by

cautious enquiries. He was not admitted that day to the *august* presence of Othman the Basha's hookha-bearer; he merely obtained the prospect of such an honour. Meanwhile, he made the most of his time with Yusuf, who, in spite of Turkish taciturnity, was to be courted into conversation.

Giovanni, he said, was at that moment in the eastern end of the palace; he was placed in a deep dungeon, under the guard of sentinels relieved every second hour.

The Basha, he added, had never yet treated the Christian with the severity he merited; contenting himself with the pleasure of now and then visiting him, and tantalizing him with hopes of liberation, which the next day destroyed; — often, indeed, tormenting him with inventions of defeats and losses sustained by the Christian powers. Mustapha especially prided himself upon the success of one idea respecting the cause nearest

his prisoner's heart : he had boasted that Malta had not been relieved ; that it was now in the hands of the Grand Seignor, and that the Order of St. John was therefore finally extirpated.

No one either dared or wished to contradict this story when told to one of the hated knights ; and Giovanni, therefore, was left in the painful belief that all he loved and honoured was indeed destroyed.

How he bore this bitter conviction, Yusuf could not tell, nor did he care ; he only knew that the Basha scrupulously fulfilled his promise to his nephew, of preserving Giovanni in life, by allowing him all its vulgar comforts of food and clothing ; but air he breathed only at night on the terraced roof of part of the seraglio, where a range of cypresses, towering from the court below, shrouded him with their tall heads from observation.

Guards, stationed on this terrace

during his walk, and guards conducting him to and from his dungeon, rendered all approach to him by that mode, completely desperate.

Recreation he had none. Neither books nor writing implements were allowed him; and he never conversed with human being, except when Mustaphâ himself, or his jesting Tartar, commissioned to mock him, came with invented tales of Turkish triumph over Christian valour.

What, then, were Giovanni's occupations? To make acquaintance with the sound of winds and waves; to watch the blasts of the former with an ear nicely tuned by this habit to all their varieties; and, as he listened to the roar or murmur of the latter, to image in fancy the distant shores which those waves had washed; to think gratefully, yet mournfully, of the past; and to turn his eyes in pious awe from the interdicted future.

10 After a brief transport at the certainty of his friend being still in life, Cesario found there was no permanent duration of that feeling for him, till he should have placed Giovanni beyond the power of such oppressors. He therefore, more earnestly than ever, besought Reuben to enter immediately upon their plan for his friend's liberation; to let no slight danger deter him in the rapid prosecution of it; nor any sum, within the large means offered for that purpose by the brethren of St. John, be deemed too immense.

Reuben's feelings were now so much interested in this business, that his prudence was less likely to throw obstacles in the way: he promised all Cesario asked; and, soon returning to the city, gave his whole thoughts to the interests of his preserver and his preserver's friend.

Cesario, thus unavoidably left to his own oppressive imaginations, missed the salutary labour of which he was often wearied in Zante. Through the day he

traversed the deck of the vessel, or vainly tried to find occupation for himself in rowing singly along the steep coast of Acarnania; and at night he came to the town, where, after short conference with Reuben on his daily progress, he would steal to the precincts of the seraglio, and there wander round it like some

“Lone, benighted wretch, shut out from lodging,  
Whose sad groans are answered by whistling  
winds.”

It was now mid winter, and all the chain of Pindus on the opposite continent was topped with snow: the wind sounded with peculiar hollowness through the multitude of leafless woods: which hang upon the skirts of that vast range; and the waves, driven with violence against the rocks of the coast, joined their monotonous and dismal roarings to the continued yelling of the storms.

Cesario's mind insensibly took the same

tone with the melancholy music of nature ; and, in spite of all for which he had to be thankful to a gracious Providence, he felt despondence fast growing upon him.

Sometimes, as he looked up to the high tower on which he was told Giovanni took his midnight walk, and saw the sparkling stars and the deep-blue sky shining through openings in the tall heads of the cypresses, his melancholy changed to momentary phrenzy, and he was ready to attempt impossibilities, and scale that impenetrable height, there at once to perish by the side of his friend.

Was it not torture to believe that friend walking unconsciously above him ; perhaps, believing himself abandoned of all he loved ; while he, Cesario, who was adventuring every thing for his sake, was only skreened from his sight by a few trees, which a single axe could at any moment level with the ground ?

But it was not the momentary gratification of his own sensibility that Cesario had to seek ; and he was bound to rein-in every impulse, which, if indulged, might prove fatal to the success of those plans upon which all his future happiness depended. He therefore denied himself even this melancholy pleasure of wandering near the prison of his friend, whenever he felt his impatient or desponding feelings becoming too strong for control.

Meanwhile, Reuben for several ensuing days visited the palace of Mustapha ; and, though never admitted to his presence, offered him in succession, through the medium of Othman, all those brocades, and shawls, and European trinkets which he had collected for that purpose.

In doing this, he wilfully prolonged their different bargainings, and displayed much obstinacy in his estimate of the value of his goods ; he did this for the



sake of becoming more intimate with the talkative Tartar.

By dextrous use of these frequent opportunities, he was enabled to ascertain the character of the man, and happily found it one exactly suited to his purpose.

Othman combined extreme love of ornament with remarkable avidity for money; and perhaps the last inclination is the natural fruit of the former: he was good-tempered from insensibility; credulous, and little disposed to calculate remote danger, when present gratification interposed. Great liveliness, a talent at extempore tale-telling, and a collection of burlesque songs, which he sang with a buffoonery that marvellously delighted his master, made him, in truth, a person of all the consequence he was said to possess.

By constant admission to the Basha in his hours of relaxation, Othman had acquired a habit of familiar merriment before him, which by degrees enabled

him to say and do things with impunity, that would have cost another his head.

It was upon these qualities, and their effects, that Reuben calculated for the completion of his scheme. Whenever he visited the seraglio, he took care to display some peculiarly gaudy article of dress before Othman, who was as sure to covet it, and bargain for its possession. At first, Reuben resisted all attempts to obtain it for a small sum, stating his own reduced fortunes, and the certainty of selling every valuable commodity for its full worth ; then at last he would let it go ; jocosely blaming Othman's amusing talents, (which, to say the truth, were indefatigable in the cause of his vanity,) and assuring him that he would be his poor merchant's ruin if he continued the same importunities and pleasantries ; he relinquished first one costly article, and then another, at half its marketable price.

By this means Reuben completely ingratiated himself with the vain Tartar ;

and during their desultory conversations, found occasions for frequently blaming the folly of the Basha in preferring the sterile gratification of shutting up a man between four stone-walls, to the fruitful possession of that tempting ransom, which, when *he* was a prisoner at Malta, he knew the Grand Master offered.

From joining in some lively censure of his master, Othman came at length to the point of wishing that Giovanni's prison-door were in one of *his* hands, and the bag of piastres in the other, "I'd open both," was his laughing remark.

"And if there were another door to open," observed the wily Reuben, "I'd follow your example, provided you would give me part of the reward. Yes, yes, my friend, after all, money is the prime thing in this world." And away went the cautious Israelite to report these favourable signs to Cesario.

As he proceeded through the town, he stopped occasionally to hurry the delivery

of certain commodities which he had ordered to complete the cargo of his vessel; and which he professed himself enabled to purchase with the profits of his traffic at the seraglio. He was anxious to have all his new property on board, so that in case he should be obliged to sail at an instant's warning from Santa Maura, he might do so with as little loss as possible.

On reaching the ship, Reuben found Cesario agitated by joy and tenderness and pious gratitude. Nicolai, after landing Tamar and her children at Maganesi, was then on board with accounts of Amadea, whom he had safely deposited in Malta, and with most liberal proofs of the Grand Master's sense of his and Tamar's services.

A letter from La Valette himself assured Cesario that he had placed the interesting Amadea in the convent of Nuns Hospitallers, where she would be treated with all the affection and care of a sister.

He congratulated him upon the bless-

ing which seemed evidently bestowed on his present enterprise, by so signal and unexpected an event as that of discovering and succouring the sister of his friend.

He next repeated his anxiety for the result of Cesario's endeavours to effect Giovanni's escape, informing him that certain vessels were dispatched to scatter themselves among the islands as he directed, as if roaming about to intercept the Turkish traders. He then stated what rewards he had bestowed on Tamar and Nicolai; and enclosed vouchers, under his hand and seal, by which the person presenting them would be entitled to receive the sum specified from the principal mercantile house in the neutral port of Trieste, as a recompense for liberating Giovanni.

Reuben's deep sunken eyes sparkled on the mere reading of these promissory notes. "I don't think he can resist these!" he exclaimed, thinking of Othman; and then he went on explaining to

Cesario his reasons for believing they would soon arrive at their expected goal.

Cesario's heart and ear was at one instant Reuben's; and the next, his heart and eye were given to the letter of Amadea. His impatience would not permit him to leave it unopened; but after running over its tender and gratifying lines, and convinced himself that she was well and all-devoted to him, he put it hastily into his breast, and turned with a glowing cheek to discuss their more important interest.

He was now decided for instant measures; and having convinced his less enterprising companion, that no greater benefit could be expected from delay, he intrusted him with the papers signed by La Valette, beseeching him to return as quickly as possible to the seraglio.

Reuben asserted, that if he were to seek Othman at an unusual hour, it might excite suspicion of there being too great confidence between them; he therefore

declined going then, devoting the evening to the entertainment of his daughter's brother-in-law.

Before night, however, he departed; having first seen Nicolai on his return to his islet-home.

The next day Reuben went on his momentous errand. He smoothed the path for the proposal he had to make, by granting to Othman, at a very low price, a piece of Genoa velvet glaringly brocaded with gold and foils, upon which the foolish Tartar had set his heart for a vest. He then prefaced his proposal by speaking of his relative Nicolai's secret trips to Sicily and other interdicted shores; and, finding that Othman expressed no disapprobation of contraband trade, he spoke of his relation as having touched at Malta, and heard there how much more anxious the Order of St. John were for the recovery of their brother Giovanni Cigala.

Again, Reuben lamented that he and

Othman were not the masters of Giovanni's fate ; and fancying themselves so for a moment, and the knight given in exchange for a round ransom, he went on to describe the different use each would make of his separate share.

Reuben's own objects of expenditure were not dazzling to youth or luxuriousness ; but those on which he imagined Othman's treasure lavished, were of a sort to inflame an effeminate passion for show and ornament.

When Reuben saw that his vivid pictures had raised Othman's desire for all those gauds to its utmost height, he first hinted, and at length told him plainly, that they might realise, if they chose, the dream he had been relating.

Othman lent a ready though startled ear to all he urged : he became serious. He could not but see that danger attended this tempting proposal ; yet the longing to possess a large sum of money was irrepressible. It prompted him, after



a little demurring, to start a variety of possible plans for the release of Giovanni; though not one of them would stand the test of Reuben's cooler consideration.

Reuben indeed discerned, with extreme concern, from canvassing Othman's schemes, that none of them had a chance of success, without the actors in them were each as ready as Cesario to sacrifice their lives to save that of the prisoner, should it be placed in danger during their attempt at his escape.

With so much jealous care had the Basha provided against such an event, that it was only after long consultation Othman struck out the following plan.

The eastern end of the seraglio looked directly upon the sea, and the tower on the top of which Giovanni took his nightly walk, was divided from the beach only by the unfrequented court in which the cypresses grew, and a high wall beyond them. If Giovanni could descend from that tower, and scale that wall, he might

either be received in a boat, or ford the strait into Acarnania.

Othman thought it possible to win over one of the guards, an Albanian Christian, who, by reason of his powerful strength, was appointed to walk by the side of the prisoner, and seize him should he attempt to throw himself headlong in despair.

Four other guards were always stationed on the platform during the hour allotted for Giovanni's walk ; but as they varied every night, Othman could not insure them by other means than mixing a speedy opiate with their coffee and tobacco, previous to their going on this particular duty.

A night might be selected dark enough to shroud their measures entirely ; so that while these stupefied guards were slumbering at one end of the platform, Giovanni and the Albanian might descend by a rope-ladder ; one end of which the latter could easily fasten to the iron spikes of the tower, while the other could

be held by Othman himself in the court below. The same ladder would help them over the wall to the sea, where it would be Reuben's business to provide for the security of the Albanian and the knight.

This scheme involved so much danger to Othman and the Albanian, that the former insisted upon the previous security of some solid gold. Reuben declared he could only offer the written bonds of the Grand Master, which *he* should consider as good as money, and receive accordingly.

Othman said he was not of such easy faith; especially since his neck would be at stake. He examined the vouchers; they might, or they might not be the hand-writing of the Grand Master, he thought: some inferior person might have written them to deceive Nicolai and gull Giovanni's guards into giving him up. When presented at Trieste they might turn out good for nothing.

In short, it was evident Othman would not risk anything till he had gained largely, and would gain more.

Convinced of Othman's sincere desire to earn the reward held out to him, but grievously disappointed by his scepticism, Reuben returned in dismay to Cesario, detailing to him the particulars of this conversation, and requesting to receive his further instructions.

In an agony of impatience, Cesario proposed the testimony of Nicolai himself. "*He* can positively assure this man that he saw those papers (though ignorant of their contents) written by La Valette's own hand."

"Stupid people are always obstinate," remarked Reuben; "I told him Nicolai could do this; but still he said, Nicolai might have been imposed upon by some one personating the Grand Master. Such exalted personages, he urged, were not in the habit of admitting smugglers to their presence. He wanted some tangible

token — some signet — some solid piastres I suspect,” — “My ring! my ring!” exclaimed Cesario joyfully, snatching it from his breast, where he wore suspended and concealed, the ring twice won, and now about to be a second time resigned for a great and meritorious purpose.

“Show him this diamond, Reuben; trust it not out of your hands, for it is more precious to me than my life. The man who would be supposed to intrust that to Nicolai, cannot be suspected of being less than one amply competent to pay any sum.”

Reuben, who saw this diamond for the first time, surveyed it in silent astonishment; and as he folded it religiously in a handkerchief, and placed it in his breast, he bowed three times more respectfully than ever to Cesario, and left him.

He returned a second time, baffled from his embassy. The sight of so splendid and beautiful an ornament had set Oth-

man's cupidity in a blaze ; so that, instead of producing the effect intended, it fixed him in the determination of refusing to accept the bonds as payment for his intended service ; alleging, that the very act of obtaining their payment might render him suspected, and put his life in danger.

Cesario was scarcely master of himself at this second check. "What is it he wants!" he exclaimed passionately. — "Can he promise me Giovanni's liberty? — let him insure me that, and he may take even this precious jewel."

"This precious jewel, indeed!" repeated Reuben, thinking solely of the intrinsic value of the stone, and placing it in every point of light to scrutinize its matchless perfection: "truly it is a ransom for an emperor! It would go hard with me, before I would part with such a stone."

"I would not part with it to save my own life, I can tell you, Reuben," re-

plied Cesario, casting a watry glance at the ring, "for it was my father's; but I'd give it, and life too, to redeem my friend."

He then entered afresh upon the conversation which had passed between the Jew and the Tartar on this eventful circumstance; impressing upon the mind of the former, the fact, that, though he would not lightly resign this treasure, he would cheerfully give the diamond in lieu of other reward, provided Othman actually compassed the escape of Giovanni.

Reuben undertook this new negotiation very unwillingly; but he did undertake it; not quite sure whether the rattling, talkative Tartar were not his equal in the talent of driving a bargain.

Reuben's return to the seraglio was, however, in an evil hour. Every thing there was in flames. News had just arrived from Constantinople, of the memorable blowing up of the Turkish

arsenal by some undiscovered incendiary. Public fame gave the detestable action to the Grand Master of Malta, in revenge for the injuries his island had sustained during the siege; and the Basha, maddened by the additional reproaches which this drew on him from the Sultan for his failure, now breathed the deadliest vengeance against every Christian knight.

He ordered Giovanni Cigala to be brought immediately before him; and having reviled him with every opprobrious name befitting a coward tyrant to bestow upon a brave man in bonds, he assured him that he now thought himself acquitted of his oath to his nephew, and that he should therefore instantly glut himself with the sight of his agonies on the hook.

“That dreadful death!” exclaimed Reuben, who had too often seen the victims of Turkish barbarity perishing on hooks, while fiends in human shape tore off their



flesh with burning pincers. “And what said the prisoner?”

“Nothing!” replied Othman, with a thoughtless laugh; “there he stood with a face as serene as yon sky: neither moving muscle nor uttering a word, and not one sentence would he utter for all the great Mustapha’s threatenings; so he was ordered off, like a dog as he is, to the condemned hole; and to-morrow, at noon, he is to be tossed upon the hook in full assembly of all good Mussulmen.”

Reuben’s yellow skin turned almost green at this frightful intelligence; he no longer thought of preserving the diamond for Cesario, but with all the earnestness of sincere concern and compassionate alarm, began to persuade Othman to interfere.

For the first time in his life, Reuben found it difficult to conceal his real motives under the mask of cold calculating self-interest; but he tried to do so, and Othman, either easily blinded, or

not anxious to investigate any thing closely, from which he was to reap advantage, suffered himself to be prevailed on.

Reuben confessed that the precious diamond came from an immediate agent of the Grand Master's, then in the island, who would willingly take any personal risk, however fearful, upon himself, if by that means he could be put in a way of releasing the knight: but that, meanwhile, if Othman could suspend the execution of Giovanni, the ring should be his instant reward.

Othman's bead-like eyes almost emitted visible rays at this assurance. "Go your ways then," he said; "be under the old locust-tree by the ruin to-night, just before moon-rise, and I'll bring you news of my speeding; I'll win the diamond, if possible; but my brain and my throat must work well for it."

"Blessed Abraham!" thought Reuben, as he stole out of the seraglio, "to

think a good man's life should depend upon a ribbald song, or monstrous tale !” and praying that Othman's talents and success might this day transcend themselves, he went sorrowfully and despondingly to seek Cesario.

The agony which followed Cesario's knowledge of his friend's immediate danger mocks description : perfect despair seized him. Reuben could with difficulty prevent his frantic bursts from being distinctly audible to those on deck : he used every argument to comfort and to instil hope : the stormy elements were not deafer than Cesario to such impotent reasonings. The wretched young man alternately upbraided Reuben for having destroyed his friend by unnecessary caution ; and then besought his pardon for such unreasonable and ungrateful reproaches.

After having nearly exhausted himself by the extravagance of his despair, he said in a determined voice, “ *I must see*

this Othman, — and this very night, Reuben : my friend's life hangs on it. You shall take me with you, when you give him the meeting at the ruin.”

“ But consider,” returned the Jew, “ our secret : I have hitherto passed you off as one of ourselves, a Jew ; not at all concerned in —— ”

“ No matter ! I take all the risk. I will avow myself Giovanni's fixed friend. Othman shall have the diamond—twenty such, if I possessed them, if he will save my friend.”

Cesario's impetuous feelings could no longer bear contradiction ; and Reuben, silently determining to prepare every thing for their instant flight from the island, foreseeing the necessity for it, yielded to his wish ; and promised, that after having first conversed with Othman, and smoothed the way for the appearance of a third in their hazardous confidence, to allow of his introduction.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE moon had not risen when Cesario and Reuben got into the little boat, which only the latter was to row to shore. Not even a single star lighted their sullen track across the waves. The night was gloomy and tempestuous; but Cesario on this occasion forgot Reuben's danger, and at no period ever calculated his own.

Reuben was less hardy; but he ventured not complaint: he only looked wistfully now and then towards the line of rocks which they were approaching, and which the light of their shaded torch showed in all their blackness.

Cesario, however, steered the boat safely into a narrow creek, where the old man disembarked with all the haste in

his power ; and, taking the torch, proceeded to the locust-tree.

As Cesario sat in the boat, he perceived a figure cowering under the dropping branches of the ivy, with which the ruin was overgrown. When Reuben stopped before the locust-tree, a few paces off, this person came forth from the old gateway and joined him.

The violent gesticulations of this person showed that he was conversing with great vehemence ; but Reuben stood so still, and seemed to take so small a share in the dialogue, that Cesario believed all was over, and Reuben stupefied with horror.

Unable to endure the intolerable suspense of such a moment, he was hastily securing his boat with the intention of joining them at all risks, when Reuben gave the signal agreed on, of shaking the torch above his head ; and Cesario then, merely staying to fasten the last noose of the rope by which he moored his little

vessel, rushed through the darkness to the eventful rendezvous.

As he sprang over the low remains of an intervening wall, and alighted beside Reuben, the glare of the torch fell equally upon his own wild countenance and upon that of Othman: he gazed eagerly at the latter, attempting to ask if Giovanni yet lived; but his lips were palsied, and he could only seize the Tartar's arm with a convulsive grasp.

“The knight lives — Othman promises —” Reuben's kind address was broken off by seeing Cesario first flush vividly, then turn deadly pale, and stagger back.

The old man ran to him; but Cesario, waving him off with one hand, while with the other he tightly pressed his heart, tottered under the shade of the ruin, and threw himself down upon one of the fragments.

The joy was too much for him; and though a smile, almost divine, shone on

his countenance, it seemed as if the agony of death was on him, and his heart-strings cracking.

Reuben checked the steps of Othman for a few moments, then went with him into the ruin.

They found Cesario still seated on the broken stone, completely unnerved by so sudden a transition from despair to hope.

“ You will swear to me that he lives,” he cried, addressing Othman, “ you will promise to aid in his escape by all the means in your power ?” and as he spoke, he laid his hand upon the diamond Othman coveted. “ I swear it by Alla !” replied the other, advancing eagerly towards the wearer of that precious ring.

Reuben then hastened with all the quickness his habitual caution would allow, to explain by what means the Tartar had procured Giovanni’s reprieve from death.

The means were briefly these.



Very soon after Reuben had quitted the seraglio that morning, Othman was summoned to soothe his master's fury by the exercise of his amusing powers: in this he had succeeded so well, that when the Basha condescended to talk with him of his savage pleasure for the morrow, Othman noticed the apathy with which the Christian had heard his sentence; and from that circumstance asserted, that death was considered rather a blessing than a punishment by him.

He advised, therefore, in a half jesting way, that the proud hero of St. John should be degraded to the lowest tasks of a slave; and, that after having thus gone through every suffering and indignity, he might at last be gratified with some dreadful and public death.

This idea met with instant approbation: Mustapha pronounced it exquisite; and the prisoner was then ordered to be led out the next morning, not to execution,

but to the dismal banks of a Turkish galley.

The scheme for Giovanni's escape was therefore to be entirely new modelled; and Othman most willingly left it solely to the invention of Cesario.

Leaving Reuben and the Tartar to their silent ruminations, Cesario buried his face in his hands, while racking his mind with a thousand impracticable schemes: at length he struck out one which seemed possible, though extremely hazardous; but it was the only one he could imagine; and as a forlorn hope he detailed it to his two companions.

Othman was to procure him employment in the same galley with Giovanni the first time it went off shore, and to give him such previous notice of its destined course, that he might provide means for their secure retreat either by sea or land.

By concealing a strong hatchet under his clothes, Cesario felt certain that he

could, at the critical moment, sever the chain which always fastens the right arm of the galley-slave to his oar, and to the bank or seat from which he rows. If this were achieved at dusk, the obscurity, the confusion, and the incapacity of the surrounding slaves, all fettered by their chains, would operate in their favour, and they could then spring into the sea, and either gain the woods of Acarnania, by fording the strait, or be taken up by Nicolai in his boat, and carried out to sea.

Cesario thought of the Maltese cruisers, now within his call ; and the more he examined his new project, coupled with their assistance, the less did he doubt its success : but he did not mention this last ground of hope to the Mussulman.

Othman deemed that part of the plan which was imparted to him, feasible ; and he entered the more willingly into it, because his own apparent share in the meditated escape, and how it might, was

not likely to be discovered ; and certainly included no personal risk to himself during its performance.

He secretly thought, that both Giovanni and his brother knight, (for such he believed Cesario to be,) would be cut peice-meal by the Turkish guard in the galley. But that was not his affair ; and promising immediate activity in the business, he enquired whether the possession of the diamond were to depend upon this meditated rescue ; if it were, he jocosely observed to the agent of Malta, that he certainly should not swim after him to obtain it ; and that consequently, if it were not made his beforehand, the whole matter must stop short.

Without uttering a word, Cesario drew the ring from his finger, and giving it one earnest kiss, a kiss as expressive of gratitude as of regret, held it out to Othman. He waited to see it glittering on the Tartar's finger, then turned away, his heart quite full of the dear conviction

that *his* only treasure, not the funds of the Order, had bought the life of his friend.

Reuben lingered many minutes behind, to exhort Othman not to allow his vanity to overmaster his discretion ; assuring him, that if he ever suffered that extraordinary stone to glitter in the eyes of the Basha, their ruin was certain.

Othman promised this very faithfully ; but the transport of admiration with which he regarded it, and the extravagancies of speech and action into which this admiration hurried him, made poor Reuben quake for the event.

“ I thought how it would be,” he muttered to himself, as he stumbled after Cesario to their boat ; “ I thought how it would be, the moment Signor Adimari insisted upon negotiating with Othman himself.”

With the dawn of the next day, Cesario was again in the boat, proceeding to Meganesi. It was no longer possible

for him to trust to the slow agency of Reuben, or to calculate any risk of danger to himself by the failure of those he must endeavour to gain over to his purpose. Giovanni's precious life hung on the wing of every passing instant, and it behoved Cesario, therefore, to dare the most imminent peril for his immediate rescue.

Regardless of Reuben's panic-struck entreaties for consideration, he rowed direct to Meganesi; then seeking, and finding out the sheltered hovel of Nicolai, invited him to a private conference,

Boldly, and without preface, he told him the work in hand; feeling himself warranted in this hardy experiment by that mixture of thoughtless contempt of public law, and that scrupulous honour in keeping voluntary engagements, which Amadea had described as marking the smuggler's conduct during their short voyage.

Nicolai did not disappoint Cesario:

his active spirit delighted in danger ; and the gratifying thought of having such noble partakers in illicit adventure, (he forgot what different motives sanctified Cesario's forced deceptions,) was perhaps one incitement to share the enterprise.

He pledged himself to be in readiness with his boat for any station and at any time Cesario would appoint ; and describing some secret grottoes, both inland and on the coast of the strait, he asserted, that if Cesario and his friend would consent to lie there concealed, he would answer for secreting them as long as their safety required. Meanwhile, he did not hesitate to embark immediately in search of the Maltese cruisers.

Cesario now intrusted him with a letter, requesting whatever cruiser Nicolai might first encounter, to advance speedily, in compliance with the Grand Master's instructions, and be within reach of further call : he then proffered him gold, but

Nicolai rejected it with some pride, and, throwing himself into his little bark, pushed off to sea.

Cesario lingered a few moments after him, to converse with Tamar upon the object of his tenderest thoughts. Tamar spoke with astonishment and respect of the honours she had seen rendered in Malta to the Zeila of Zante : but when she described that Zeila's soothing concern for the suffering children, who had never before known the motion of a ship, and the terrors of the sea, the mother's grateful heart lost sight of arbitrary distinctions, and poured forth a full tide of familiar affection.

She was now sufficiently instructed in Amadea's and Cesario's real condition to give a shrewd guess at the nature of their sympathy ; and she ventured, therefore, with a little of her father's adroitness, to mix up so many touching proofs of Amadea's constant and fond recollection of her absent lover, that Cesario, scarcely



knowing what it was that made him so happy, left Meganesi as if he could tread on air.

Othman was not slow of performing his promise : in a few days afterwards, he sent Reuben to inform Cesario, that two Maltese galleys having appeared in those seas, and one of them having already made prize of a rich merchant-ship, he had persuaded the Basha to attempt taking the successful enemy.

In consequence of this advice, Mustapha had ordered the Sultana (his largest galley) to be immediately got ready for sea ; and as she was but lately come round from Constantinople, and in excellent condition, there was not a doubt of her being able to get out of port in a very few days.

If Cesario thought this galley, Othman said, a fit ground for the eventful scene they had to play, as Giovanni would certainly be placed in her, Othman could

easily obtain an ostensible situation for s friend in the same vessel.

Cesario's answer was prompt and decisive for instantly seizing this first opportunity : he then exhorted Reuben to provide for his own safety immediately, by sailing with the first fair wind ; leaving him, (as if they had parted in an ill-humour,) apparently to seek other employment, or the means of returning to his home.

Evident necessity would then afford a plea for his afterwards accepting a subordinate station on board the galley of the Basha.

Reuben was not easily induced to abandon Cesario to his fate ; but the other used such earnest entreaties and solid arguments in support of his anxious wish, that the old man was at length prevailed on to give a reluctant consent. When he did so, he half determined to yield assent to another of Cesario's proposals, which was, that he would finally

renounce Turkish Greece, and, drawing round him his daughter and her family, jointly pursue their habits of industry under the protection of their Italian friends.

Some tears were shed on both sides when they parted ; and as Cesario, from the caverned hut of Nicolai, took his farewell look of Reuben's departing vessel, (which was going straight to Malta, charged with all that love and gratitude could address to Amadea and La Vallette,) his blood thrilled at the awful crisis to which he had himself arrived.

His life, and that far dearer to him, the life of Giovanni, lay now between the faith of a desperate smuggler and the unprincipled flatterer of a tyrant. What crumbling pillars to rest on ! Yet, if the hand of Heaven held them up, though his task had been to pile mountains upon ocean, even *they* would not have failed him.

On the very day of Reuben's departure,

Cesario, by previous agreement with Othman, appeared at the landing-place of the beach of Santa Maura; addressing himself, as if by chance, to Othman, who, as if by chance, was then in company with the head-carpenter of the Basha.

Having listened to Cesario's very brief account of his desertion by a master who had no longer need of him; and having questioned him on his share in re-fitting Reuben's vessel; Othman, in his own language, congratulated the carpenter on the wonderful luck of this rencontre, urging him to take advantage of the young Jew's necessity, and make a good bargain with him: as he could assure Meshnoul (so the carpenter was called) that from what he had heard Reuben say, during his traffic with him, of the young fellow's cleverness and industry, he was a prize worth catching.

Meshnoul was as stupid and sordid as Othman could desire; and seeing no ob-

ject whatever but gain, he struck an instant bargain with Cesario.

Othman had now done his part, secretly glad to get rid of a person who might, if discontented with his attempts at serving him, discover the secret of his infidelity to his master; and, turning his bugle eyes on Cesario, with a glance which meant, perhaps, to say as much, and which excited alarm by its expression of selfish exultation, he retrod his steps to the seraglio.

“ I am in the Rubicon now, and there is no receding !” exclaimed Cesario inwardly, as he followed his new master ; “ but at least I shall share the fate of my friend, be that what it may ; and Amadea is safe !”

A sigh followed the tender image of her he loved, while his softened heart imagined all she must suffer, if it were not in the decrees of Providence that they should ever meet again.

Only they whose fates are cast among

the storms of life can completely understand the feelings of Cesario. Astonishing reverses and preservations; old friendships vanishing under their weight, and new ones solicitously running to their support; a variety of checks and of mercies, keep their souls in a continual sense of their own dependence and of their Creator's authority. These are the characters which feel, in the fullest tide of youthful spirits, when elated by unexpected joy, an awe and a gratitude impossible to be comprehended by those whose fortunate youth has passed without vicissitude.

Thus Cesario, young, animated, intrepid, resolute to dare all and to do all for laudable objects, still felt even those powers and that resolution as nothing, without the sanction of Almighty Providence. His heart, therefore, gradually turned from earth to heaven, imploring a blessing and receiving the inspiration of hope.

On reaching the Sultana he found her, as Othman had described, nearly ready for sea. Most of her people were on shore, but some inferior officers had got on board impatient for the chance of a prize.

Meshnoul went lazily to work, and set Cesario his task. Cesario gave his soul to his humble employment; and advanced, therefore, so rapidly, that the carpenter did indeed believe he had got a prize in him. The officers were pleased with an activity which seconded their wishes; so that Cesario ventured even to speed his slower master by volunteering a variety of useful assistances, all tending to accelerate the completion of the Sultana.

On the fourth morning the vessel was pronounced perfect, and the slaves appointed to row in her were then brought to take their seats on her banks.

As the galley lay at the usual place of anchorage, far below the town, the slaves

were necessarily brought to her in boats. While these were approaching, Cesario stood on the deck of the Sultana watching their progress.

All the galley-slaves were stripped to the waist, as is customary, and their heads uncovered. Many of them were Turkish or Greek malefactors, and others captured enemies, who had toiled so long at the oar as to be scarcely distinguishable from their infidel companions.

Amongst these swarthy and withered figures, the yet unwasted and spotless body of Giovanni shone like some sculptured Grecian deity in the midst of Egyptian idols.

Cesario, with mournful admiration, recognised his friend in that glorious form ; but as the boats drew nearer, and showed him that noble breast covered with the scars of wounds, a crowd of affecting ideas rushed into his mind.

On those immortalising scars he fixed his gushing eyes ; he stretched out his



arms, while his whole heart seemed welling towards his friend in a thousand streams.

Some inarticulate sounds escaped him; but feeling that in another instant he should lose all self-command, he fled from the deck, nor returned to it till each boat had reached the Sultana, and deposited its wretched cargo.

The wild tumult of soul which succeeded in Cesario to those few moments of softness is indescribable. The heavy sound of the slaves' feet above his head, the horrid clank of their chains, the threatening voices and echoing whips of their inhuman masters, the half-uttered groans of some of the slaves, and the deep-drawn sighs of others, (sighs, now as habitual as their breathings,) roused all that was man in his soul.

“O, not for thee alone, my Giovanni,” he exclaimed, feeling every sigh and groan that reached him enter his very

heart, and trying to shut them out by burying his head in his hands.

Nothing but the hope of successfully contending, hereafter, for the liberation of these unhappy men could have enabled him to control his transport of virtuous fury now; that thought calmed him; and, assured that humanity as well as friendship would nerve his arm, should Heaven grant him the opportunity he prayed for, he waited till he believed the slaves settled in their places, and then he slowly ascended to the deck.

Cesario stood at a distance, while his eager and almost trembling eyes ran over the dark files of wretches: they rested on the face of his friend — that face so beloved! that face so sanctified by a thousand touching and solemn recollections.

He expected to have found it changed; but it was the same. A soul, serene in conscious virtue and Christian submission, shone in that noble countenance, pre-

serving its youth, its clearness, its brightness.

To the rivetted gaze of Cesario, it seemed as if no mortal cloud had dimmed that heavenly light, since he had seen it shining from Giovanni's eyes in the church of St. John. The same expression, the same light, were still in those saintly eyes; but as they slowly turned from the heaven on which they had first rested, to wander over the miserable beings around, Cesario saw them gradually fill with tears.

His own were ready to gush out with tenderness and grief: he was rent with impatient yearnings to run and throw himself upon the neck of his friend; but again he conquered himself, and moved away that he might wind up his soul to the great exertion before him.

His agitation would not perhaps have passed unnoticed, had not the arrival of the Basha, with his suite, created a confusion which happily screened all other

eccentricities. This event was the signal for departure. A discharge of musquetry on board was answered by an equal number of guns from the castle of Santa Maura ; after which the sails were given to the wind, the slaves plied their oars, and the Sultana proceeded on her way.

It was the Basha's intention to proceed only to the extremity of the island ; there to be relanded, (after a short stretch out to sea,) while the galley should pursue her chase of the Maltese cruisers : but the elements did not acknowledge his authority: ere they had got a league's distance, the wind suddenly shifted and blew so furiously off the island, accompanied with hail and rain, that the Sultana was obliged to yield to its power.

Cesario, scarcely knowing whether to rejoice or to deprecate this circumstance, (having meditated that his friend's rescue should take place after the re-landing of the Basha should give them better prospect of escape,) looked anxiously round

for the little bark of Nicolai, which had hitherto followed their track, secured from notice by its Turkish appearance. He saw it still faithfully contending with the elements; and his heart ached with a grateful feeling of regret at the desperate habits of him by whom it was so honestly guided.

Hitherto the commander of the *Sultana* had endeavoured to regain the shore by dint of rowing; and for this purpose every horrid expedient familiar to the piratical powers in those days, was fully exercised. Blows, execrations, lashes, were dealt to such of the unhappy creatures as were incapacitated from great exertions either by despair or weakness. One slave dropt fainting under the laceration of the whip: and Cesario, whose every limb now quivered with strong abhorrence, started forwards, offering to take the wretched man's seat.

Hitherto he had kept far from the cognisance of Giovanni, who, at a dis-

tance, could not have discovered his friend under his Jewish disguise, even had his eye rested on him: Cesario was now about to come directly under his notice; ere he did so, he looked up to the increasing clouds, and as he felt their chilling torrents driven against him by the furious blasts, he secretly prayed that their mingled storm was destined to aid his friend's deliverance.

With unsteady limbs he now took his seat on the bench next to the only object which now possessed his thoughts. Giovanni was at that moment exerting all his strength to speed the homeward course of the galley; as on that depended the temporary deliverance of his weaker fellow-sufferers from their toil and their indignities. The motive ennobled the act. He did not observe who sat down beside him, while his eyes followed the poor fainting slave that was borne away.

Every pulse beating almost to bursting, and his sight obscured as if by a thick

film, Cesario grasped the vacant oar, his head buried in his breast and shaded by his clustered locks. Every face was soon turned landward, attracted by the rushing of a louder blast : at that moment, Cesario gently touched Giovanni, and raising his head, from which he shook back the hair, turned his face full upon him.

Giovanni's eye met his : — half springing from his seat with a flash of vivid red, a stifled cry, a glance, Giovanni's shaking limbs showed his recognition. A second glance exchanged their souls.

The next instant each head was turned away, seemingly intent upon their unworthy tasks. Could their hearts have been laid open at that instant, what powerful and struggling passions had amazed those who saw them !

Giovanni was as if awaked in a new world ; and Cesario, agitated a thousand-fold by hopes and fears and tender remembrances, was counting every pulse of

the passing hour, conscious that in it was to be summed up the destinies of Giovanni, of himself, and of Amadea.

The sleety storm had abated, but the wind still blew the galley violently out to sea. Nicolai's little bark, with its single sail rent to pieces, was now driven beyond sight. Only one vessel was visible in the sea between Santa Maura and Corfu, pursuing the same course with the Sultana.

As the vessels neared each other, Cesario's heart beat almost audibly: he thought he discovered the peculiar form of a Maltese cruiser; and he was not wrong. When the Sultana drew near, the strange vessel suddenly hoisted the black cross of Malta, and made evident preparation for action.

Again Cesario's dark glancing eye flashed upon that of Giovanni; Giovanni needed no interpretation of its kindling meaning; his illuminated countenance reflected the answer his friend's had



sought; and, plying their oars, each seemed to second the eager wish of the Basha, to attain the small island of Toxa, the nearest refuge then open to the alarmed Mussulmen.

The Basha, who had indeed no inclination to hazard his own person in an engagement by sea, exhorted his people to avoid an action with the Maltese galley, intimating that his duty as a governor, however anxious he might be for the combat, must prevent his sanctioning a chase which might carry him from his government for an indefinite time; he promised them, that when they should have landed him at Toxa, they should have permission to seek the enemy. His crew therefore used every exertion to get beyond reach of the Maltese, but their exertion was vain.

So long as Mustapha thought he might escape without the appearance of an actual flight, he continued his course towards Toxa; but the determination of

the Maltese to arrest her progress, having become too apparent for him to elude the disgrace which must be attached to the Turkish flag, should it be made manifest that he had positively avoided an action, the Basha, yielding to necessity, ordered the commander to give the proper directions for meeting the enemy.

Cesario's roused soul now flamed in his eyes, as, half-starting from his oar, he bent forward, watching the advance of his Christian coadjutors. Giovanni, meanwhile, preserved a majestic stillness of action and of look, which imposed some curb upon the more tumultuous agitation of his friend.

The opposing vessels soon closed and boarded; and the respective crews, impelled by their mutual hatred, rushed to the fight. The combat was obstinate; but nothing could resist the ardour and impetuosity of the Maltese, who, animated with the double motive of liberating their friends, whom they knew

to be on board, and of triumphing again over their inveterate enemy the Basha, sprang forward with the dreadful shout of "Revenge!"

At that instant, while the Christians were pouring upon the deck of the enemy, and the infidels opposing fierce resistance; amid the crash and the uproar, the thunder and volumed smoke of their mutual firing, Cesario drew forth the hatchet concealed under his garment, and with one stroke severed the chain that fettered the arm of Giovanni; then, like the lioness rushing away with her rescued young, he darted with him into the ranks of their friends.

The names of "Cigala" and "Adimari!" the war-cry of "Liberty and St. John!" thrilled through the hearts of friends and enemies. A well-known voice echoed those thrilling sounds: it was the voice of Rodolphe. Giovanni saw him; recognised him; but this was no time for greetings: all was tumult,

and strife and slaughter ; and, plunging into the thick of the combatants, Giovanni and Cesario ran to attain their dear sought-for freedom.

“ Treason !—Treachery !” resounded from the Basha and his officers, as they retreated for a moment before the impetuous rush of the Christians.

Cesario, with his tremendous hatchet, and Giovanni with a scymitar snatched from an enemy, scattered destruction around : the former darted on the infuriate Mustapha, to give him the death he merited ; but another arm than his was destined to avenge his friend : a ball from some common musqueteer struck the Basha on the temple, and he fell.

As the fierce Mustapha dropped, the captain of the Maltese called on the remaining Turks to surrender, offering them their lives and liberties upon that condition. One instant the infidels hesitated ; the next, they struck their flag.

It was not on the deck of the Maltese

vessel, that Cesario and Giovanni gave loose to their gushing hearts. After having hastily exchanged grateful salutations with their Christian brethren, and severally raised from their feet to their bosoms, the faithful and weeping Rodolphe, they retired below; and there, in one sacred embrace, filled up the mighty measure of their happiness.

“ My Giovanni!” — “ Brother of my soul!” were the first words they uttered, after a long, long indulgence of overpowering joy. “ Brother!” repeated Cesario, fixing on him his all-expressing eyes, “ O Giovanni!” The blissful disclosure he had to make was not to be withheld; it burst from his heart in broken, incoherent sentences, which only the rapid and agitated questions of his friend forced into an intelligible form. When, at last, the latter comprehended *all* that impetuous narrative included, he covered his joyfully-suffused face with his hands, gasping, as he got with dif-

ficulty into another cabin, — “No more — no more, Cesario, now!”

As he retreated into the room he closed the door; there to throw himself, without even the witness of friendship, before Him whose bounteous hand was thus prodigal of blessings. Cesario’s grateful soul was not silent during those solemn moments: it ascended in the same wordless thanksgiving to the same Gracious Power: and when the friends met again, they needed no explanation of their separation.

According to the terms of their surrender, the Turkish prisoners were all landed at Corfu; after which, the Maltese galley, with her prize, and the released Christians, proceeded on her homeward way.

Cesario might have enforced a conqueror’s right, and reclaimed the diamond he had given to Othman; or he might have bought it back: but he scorned the meanness of the first act, and the latter he

did not wish for : he cherished the consciousness of having redeemed Giovanni's life and liberty by a great sacrifice.

In the recapitulation of all their sufferings and sympathies of feeling, Cesario and Giovanni scarcely noted the days which passed at sea. The latter thirsted to hear every circumstance of his sister's character and appearance ; and Cesario loved but too well to repeat the same descriptions. When they discussed the particulars of the siege, (which had been so mis-stated by the Turks,) Rodolphe often shared the conversation, ennobled by his own brave share in those memorable scenes, and endeared to both friends by his tried attachment.

Giovanni's own narrative was barren of incident. At first, uniform dreariness and solitude ; and finally, insult and degradation made up its annals.

“ Yet I had my luxury, my Cesario !” he said smiling, when the latter uttered some violent apostrophe at his dismal

situation in Santa Maura. "It was the hour they allotted me upon the platform of the tower. The feeling of the pure air, the view of the splendid heavens, the glimpses I caught through the cypresses of the sea and the islands, and the adjacent shores, supplied me with some of the most delightful emotions I ever remember to have experienced. I had no other enjoyment, and I felt its full value.

"When I believed you had perished with all my brave friends in Malta, how often did I look on those heavens sparkling with stars, and think that in one of its radiant worlds, perhaps, I should meet my Cesario again."

Giovanni's eyes suffused with tenderness, and he stopt a moment, returning the pressure of his friend's hand with equal emotion. Cesario thought of Amadea's yet tenderer eyes, and sighed with fond impatience. Giovanni resumed, — "As long as I live, I shall love one or two particular stars, because they hap-



pened to be the most frequent subjects of my visionary fancies.”

In discourses like these passed the hour. A clear atmosphere, enlivened by a February sun, made every object cheerful, when the vessel which contained the friends entered the great port of Malta. The knight who commanded her had received instructions from the Grand Master when he left him, to announce success, if successful, by a certain number of signal guns: these were no sooner discharged, than the thundering echo of St. Angelo's spread the joyful tidings over the whole island; and when their bravest knight landed on the shore, he saw collected there, amongst the crowd of obscurer persons, all that remained of his own numerous brethren.

A multitude of regrets thronged on him; and the shades of all the buried heroes seemed to rise before his eyes and those of Cesario; but unwilling to damp the sacred pleasure of this moment, they

both dismissed their gathering sadness, and advanced into the eager crowd.

As Giovanni threw himself at the feet of the Grand Master, the latter raised him to his breast; and while he held him there, named him aloud to a vacant Commandery in Italy: then turning to Cesario, who was fervently kissing his outstretched hand, he added, "Heaven has united your hearts; I will not divide your lives!"

A burst of sympathy rose from the surrounding persons; it was repeated when Giovanni, claiming for Rodolphe the honour once promised that faithful follower by the venerable Dueguerras, obtained for him permission to assume the inferior habit of the Order, and to accompany him to Italy.

"Pardon me, if I now enquire for my greatest happiness!" said Giovanni, reading the impatient eyes of his agitated friend: "My sister——"

"You will find her in the convent of

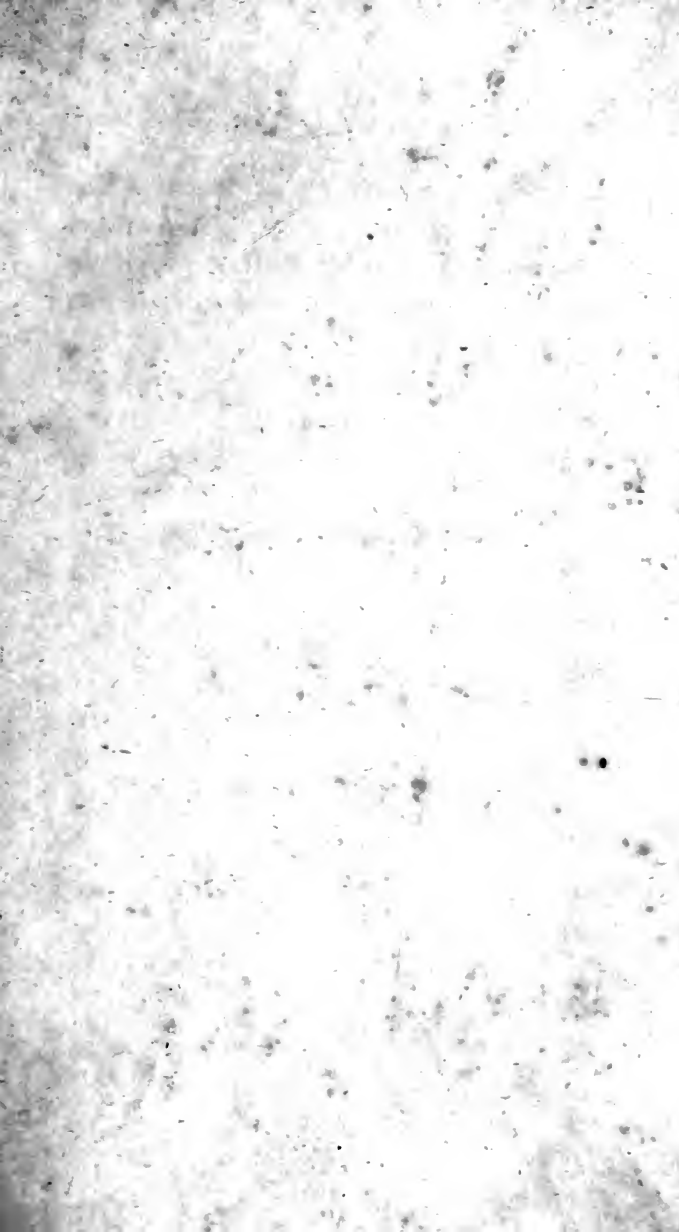
our nuns," replied La Valette ; and, releasing the hands, which he still affectionately held, of both friends, he motioned them to obey their own wishes.

With this permission they hastened immediately to the convent. Their names admitted them into a vacant apartment, to which Amadea was summoned : they were told, that, already apprised of their arrival by the long-watched signal guns, she was now just recovered from the overpowering effects of her joy and gratitude.

The hearts of both her lover and brother long beat at the sound of every step which caught their ear. " Ah, that is hers !" exclaimed Cesario at last, springing to the door in blissful certainty : he saw her radiant in beauty and joy and love ; she started back at his different habit ; but once meeting his eyes, she was just going to throw herself upon his breast, when, seeing Giovanni by his side, (Giovanni all pale with strong emotion,)

she uttered a faint cry of tender transported recognition; cast on him an imploring look that asked forgiveness for past error; and sunk into *his* fondly-extended arms.

THE END.







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